



perhaps with the sole exception of Rossini—are pretty wretched reading. Penny, sickness and lack of understanding are perennial elements; our own age introduces the particular villainy of the Nazis (who drove out the Aryan Christian Hindemith as well as the Jews) and the dubious refuge of Hollywood.

But the film music which Schoenberg could not compose ("Are you trying to save my life by killing me?") was written by others, some of them also distinguished exiles, and it has earned at last the tribute of a most absorbing survey by Christopher Palmer and John Gilllett. Here we learn that, for *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, "Herrmann used the sound of telegraph wires singing at 4 am to characterise Mephisto and had the overtones of C printed on the negative in the form of electronic impulses so that when the film was projected a phantom fundamental was produced," and that undercurrents of the action of animated films is known as "Mickey-Mousing". While we are in this area of music brought to the people, we may note that Pop and Rock have been carefully distinguished from the long article with the latter and the rest as part of a continuum beginning with Pinaud, Denza and Balle and perhaps even earlier. It is refreshing to find such objective and literate treatment of phenomena like Elvis Presley, who stands with the kind of material Bill Haley had used but "was a much better musician and a more dynamic personality, and in his singing style, gestures and stage deportment... often emphasised the sexual implications of rock and roll more than other white musicians had dared". And so, after the *Jayce* Consort of Viola, to jazz, surveyed by Max Harrison, whose seriousness of approach is confirmed in his final quotation from Schoenberg: "The higher an artistic ideal stands, the greater the range of questions, complexes, associations, problems and feelings it will have to cover; and the better it succeeds in compressing this universality into a minimum space, the higher it will stand."

This is fine history and excellent discography, but it might have been better for a few music-type illustrations and a closer consideration of jazz harmonies, which is a kind of instinctual impressionism, and of the "blue" scale, whose flattened thirds and seconds Harrison finds "not the blues scale" but a "jazz scale". In no way specifically African, nor negroid, still less exclusively American, jazz, so I must learn about *The Big Omelette* under Lambert (another neglected British composer) and the *Rhapsody in Blue* under Gerhart. Charles Schwartz, in the two columns and a bit, finds the Jewish *Pravda* of Gerhart's rhythms and disillusions by telling us that the opening "then three of them devoted to lavish... from the mid-nineteenth century, according to Lorenzo Bianconi, the composer Gesualdo, as did Lawin, who assigned the eccentric

Prince of Venosa to "an imaginary, heroic history of visionary prophets". Bianconi finds in him "an exhibitionist and at the same time secretly individualism... socially and historically conditioned by his melancholy evasion of history and society". Gesualdo, as is perhaps too well known, murdered his wife and her lover in the act and then retired to cultivate a style too advanced for Wagner, let alone the seventeenth century as we think we know the seventeenth century.

Indeed, browsing in Grove shakes one's complacent view of Western musical history as a straight progressive line, exhibiting with the adoption of once-forbidden tonalities or brass instruments with keys, ever more efficient modes of expressing states of feeling or building allegories of divine order (if music is "really" concerned with these things: we do not know and we shall never know). A small Scandinavian composer whose name begins with K is using Stravinskian discords while Grieg is selling bonbons filled with music (Debussy's metaphor). Even Duruflé in the Ninth or "New World" Symphony is using consecutive secondary sevenths before history properly allows (that second movement, incidentally, was intended to be in C, but Dvorak had found chords suitable for getting from E minor to D flat), and Puccini, whom history tells not to administer musical shocks, shocks with the bare fifths of the third act of *La Bohème*. And Gesualdo uses processions of unraised triads in what looks like the manner of Vaughan Williams but, of course, is not. Even when the chromaticisms of Purcell's early anthems and string fantasias sound "curiously modern", Jack Westrup, in his admirable essay on the composer, tells us that "they are a logical extension of the practice of his immediate predecessors, particularly Locke".

Over a hundred pages are given to Opera—a substantial book in itself, with a team of expert authors too numerous to list here, though the editor is among them. The literary lover of the form need fear no technicalities. The strength of the survey is indicated by the firmness of its definitions and by its willingness to plunge at once into exemplification. "Music... strengthened, subtilized or infected any words that are uttered on the stage. It can also carry hints about words, or feelings that are left unexpressed. Examples? The second movement to the aria 'Le calme renne dans mon cœur' in Gluck's *Phaëte*—an *Andante*, where the singer's throbs of the viola 'contradict the singer's words and instruct the listener that the calm is illusory'. The new theme in the closing scene of *Das Rheingold*, which tells the auditor that an idea has just struck Wotan—great and forgotten, it is the series of glances of lovers' hands, which are left, unspoken or perceived, to be a sentiment or purpose. And one of the major problems of the form is subsumed in the general pre-amble: 'should primary be given to the words or the music? Two operas have taken the latter line: Strauss's *Salome* (1905) and Strauss's *Capriccio* (1924). We know where the true primary lies in dramatic success in the

theatre the claims of both literature and music are subdued to what will work and earn money. The greatness of Verdi and Puccini was never wholly musical. Both knew as much about their librettists, if not more, as about the dramatically feasible. Mozart, too, knew more than Metastasio but was not big enough to prevail over the Laureate of the Empire. And, in pursuing dramatic success, composers are not to be subjected to the analyses of textbook musicians shockable by irregularities. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is not thought much of as a musician, but he deserves his long entry in Grove because *Le Devin du village* and *Pugmilion* inaugurated respectively the age of the *opéra comique* and the tradition of the melodrama. Daniel Heartz tells us of weak part-writing, parallel fifths in *Le Devin*, but rightly adds: "It is needless to ask whether a work of such genius such as this opens its 'good'—it held the attention of several generations and continued to form musical tastes to the time of Berlioz."

One is glad to see that another literary man is considered in his role of musical amateur. Ezra Pound, reviewer of music as "William Atheling" for the *London New Age*, one of the founders, through his Rapallo concerts in the 1930s, of the modern cult of Vivaldi and, above all, innovative composer of the opera *Villon*. Among the music critics honoured by inclusion, Bernard Shaw leads all the rest in a lively two columns from Robert Anderson which not only summarises the achievement of "Corneo di Bessetto" but also indicates the dramatic effectiveness of some of the dramatic efforts in the plays—the mixture of Wagner and *Die Zauberflöte*, for instance.

In the Welsh interest

By Martin Cooper

MALCOLM BOYD

Grace Williams
Composers of Wales, 4
Paperback, £2.50.
96pp. University of Wales Press.
0 7083 0762 0

Not many composers, in any age, provide the material for a whole book, but there are always those in danger of being unjustly forgotten. It is to prevent this happening that the series of studies by Malcolm Boyd on Grace Williams is a model of its kind. Although the percentage of music-lovers and performers in the Welsh population is extraordinarily high, not many Welsh composers have achieved more than a regional, or at most national significance, and Mr Boyd makes no exaggerated claims for Grace Williams.

She was modest, a fault, never losing the sense of being a woman competing in a man's world.

Wanda Landowska (1877-1959), the harpsichordist and pianist who played a major role in the revival of harpsichord playing in this century, as a child, and playing for Tolstoy at his house in 1909, the year before his death. These pictures are among nearly 300 collected in *The Great Instrumentalists in Historic Photographs*, edited and introduced by James Camner (148pp, Dover/Constable, £3.50, 0 486 23907 1). As often as not, composers are accomplished performers, and among the instrumentalists depicted are—to name only a few—Brahms and Bruckner, Busoni, indignantly handsome; Dohnanyi, Franck and Grieg; Liszt, resplendent in a flowing cassock; and Rachmaninoff, "one of the greatest pianists of his time, and a virtuoso of staggering abilities, as his compositions (written for himself) demonstrate".

In the fourth play of *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw's master, Samuel Butler, who believed music had helped with Handel, produced, we are told in a brief dismissive essay, very frigid and worthless pastiches of his idol, Shakespeare, who was not Shaw's master, and on whose connection with music whole large volumes have been written, is granted only four pages. Of Shakespeare's own presumed musicality little is said. The two themes which appear solmized in respectively *Love's Labour's Lost* (C-D-G-A-B-F) and *King Lear* (the first four notes of Adinolfi's big tune in the War-say Concerto) are not mentioned, neither is his imperfect understanding of the term "fugue". In the sonnet on his lady playing the virginals nor his vivid use of a lute-tuning metaphor in *Macbeth*. But "his shrewd assessment of music's power to contribute to drama" is not neglected. It influenced Goethe in *Egmont* and *Faust* and, more pertinently, Verdi's and Bolto's *Falstaff*.

Of the immense and lightly carried scholarship in the articles on old music I will say nothing. Indeed, there is nothing more to say about the whole great achievement, a masterpiece of Britannica-American collaboration with notable contributions from Europe. The

quality of production is very high, with fine and always relevant illustrations and no typographical error that I have been able to spot. The computer's presence is indicated only by its ignorance of morphemes. Longish monosyllables like *schemata* look like polysyllables to the electronic eye and undergo line-end hyphenization. This is an innovation we have to get used to.

Sir George Grove has, as he has to have, his own brief entry. To call the new Grove "Grove" as all may seem merely an act of national piety. A man once boasted that he had possessed the same axe for forty years, except for three new hobs and five new blades. Still, we may accept a kind of mystical continuity and find in this astonishing compendium the fulfilment of an aim essentially Victorian. I understand that the new Grove, which will also come any close to a representation of the past—the original publisher and the true blazon of continuity—an investment of more than three million pounds, will have to last us for fifty years. It is doubtful whether, in 2031, Western or universal man will have come any closer to an understanding of what music is or what it does. The new and presumably still vaster Grove that will come out next will be another monument to a sustenance mystery.

scenery, especially the sea. Probably her best works, in Mr Boyd's opinion—apart from her countless admirable, but wholly unpretentious works for schools—are a choral suite "The Dancers" (1951) and a handful of pieces from her last creative period—Second Symphony, *Mass Cambrensis* and an opera *Mass Calvary*, based on the legend of *Albert Herring*, on a Maupassant story. The ambitious *Carnegie* *Autumn*, to a Latin text and written for the Cardiff Festival of Contemporary Music, sounds well worth an occasional airing.

If none of Grace Williams's larger works have found a place in the repertoire, it was not from lack of self-confidence, but more from an innate lack of confidence. She seems never quite to have been able to believe in her own creative talents, and the integrity which was the keynote of her character made it impossible for her wholly to succeed in anything that she did not believe in. Malcolm Boyd has painted an admirably honest and sympathetic portrait which will preserve her image—and some of her music, it is to be hoped—as that of an "honoured artist" not only of Wales but in an absolute sense.

TRUMAN CAPOTE:
Music for Chameleons
262pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10541 2

RONALD WEBER:
*The Literature of Fact:
Literary Nonfiction in American Writing*
181p. Ohio University Press. £9.
0 8214 0558 6

The longest item in *Music for Chameleons*, a collection of "New Writing" by Truman Capote, is entitled "Handcarved Coffins: A Nonfiction Account of an American Crime". It is described on the dust-jacket as "the true story" of "the brutal crimes of a real-life murderer", and has just been serialized in the *Sunday Times* as a "true account of murder in a small American town".

The chief business of this review will be to argue that "Handcarved Coffins" is not a true story of actual crime, but a work of literary fiction. There are two grounds for this judgment—neither sufficient in itself, but in combination irresistible. First, there is the inherent implausibility of the discrete events narrated, and the absence of any circumstantial data about them that might be verified. Secondly, there is the very literary "feel" of the whole text: that is, the experienced reader recognizes, as he works his way through it, structural features that are characteristic of literary fictions in general, and of the classic detective story in particular. "Handcarved Coffins" therefore raises some very interesting questions of literary theory, such as: what is "literariness" and what is "fictionality" and what is the relationship between these two categories, and what difference does it make to our reading of a narrative if it claims to be "true", and what difference if we reject that claim?

Such questions are bound to be raised by the kind of writing variously called "the nonfiction novel", "faction", and "the New Journalism". If Truman Capote did not exactly invent it (it goes back at least as far as Defoe), he may claim to have initiated a contemporary vogue for the genre with his mastery in *Cold Blood*: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences (1966), inspiring a number of similar exercises by other American writers that are conscientiously surveyed by Ronald Weber in *The Literature of Fact*, a book which is itself factually rather than theoretically illuminating. One of the most recent, and perhaps most distinguished examples of the genre was Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song*. Capote has, as he says in the preface to *Music for Chameleons*, observing that Mailer, "in the most fully described, the argument of *Cold Blood* as 'a failure of imagination', himself went on to write some very successful and highly profitable nonfiction novels, "though he has always been very careful to describe them as nonfiction novels".

Technically, the two rivals have developed in opposite directions. In *Cold Blood* was written in a style of austere, Flaubertian impersonality, the author revealing nothing of his own feelings about the crime and persons represented, and this was a source of scandal to some readers. (Was it Kenneth Tynan who observed sourly that the only cold blood in the book was the author's? In this connection it is interesting that in one of the short pieces, *Music for Chameleons*, Capote reveals that he vomited after witnessing the hangings of Hickcock and Smith, so clinically described in *Cold Blood*, Mailer, of course, put his own flamboyant and highly rhetorical voice in the foreground of *The Armies of the Night*, *Midwinter*, *The Siege of Chicago*, and *Of A Fire on the Moon*, and it was only in *The Executioner's Song* that he limited Capote's impersonal, characteristically perverse of Professor Weber to reveal the absence of Mailer's own persona from this book, since it was forced upon him by the circumstance that he did not himself witness the main events of the drama). Capote, meanwhile, has moved to

wards a more confessional, if-centred form of writing. His next major project after *In Cold Blood*, as he tells us in the preface to *Music for Chameleons*, was "a variation on the nonfiction novel", a candid, uncensored chronicle about himself and his friends in high and literary society entitled *Answered Prayers* ("More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones"—St. Thérèse). Some parts of this work were published in *Esquire* in 1975/6 and were received with a mixture of criticism and praise, with anger by those whose private lives were exposed to public gaze. Violation of privacy and risk of libel are ethical and legal issues that inevitably arise from writing of this kind. Professor Weber explains that the New Journalists usually obtain "release" from everyone concerned before publishing—a process that can be very expensive, time-consuming and frustrating; Capote seems not to have bothered. In 1977, he confides, he stopped writing *Answered Prayers* because he was suffering a creative and personal crisis, and he was unable to write the same time. He totally lost faith in his own writing:

I read every word I'd ever published and decided that never, not once in my writing life, had I completely exploded all the energy and aesthetic excitement that material contained... The problem was: how can a writer successfully combine within a single form—say the short story—all he knows about writing? For that was why my work was often insufficiently illuminated: the voltage was there, but by restricting myself to the techniques of whatever form I was working in, I was not using everything I knew about writing—all I'd learned from film scripts, plays, reportage, poetry, the short story, novels, the novel.

Capote then proceeded to experiment with a new synthesis of these different kinds of writing, of which *Music for Chameleons* contains the first fruits. (A revised version of *Answered Prayers* according to the same principles is, we are assured, in progress.)

The main formal features of this new style are two: the placing of the authorial persona in the foreground of the narrative; and the frequent use of a format that combines direct, present-tense narrative with dramatic script, with occasional "stage directions" with interpolated passages of description or summary that are sometimes written in the present tense appropriate to a screenplay, and sometimes in the past tense of a conventional narrative. Of the thirteen pieces in this collection, only "Mojave", a coolly ironic tale of sexual hankings among the Manhattan rich, could be described as a conventional short story. It begins:

At 5 p.m. that winter afternoon she had an appointment with Dr. B. She was a former psychoanalyst and currently her lover. When their relationship had changed from the analytical to the emotional, he insisted, on ethical grounds, that she cease to be his patient. That it mattered. He had not been of much help as an analyst, and as a lover—well, once she had watched him running to catch a bus, two hundred and twenty pounds of shortish, friendly, frizzly-haired, lip-heavy, myopic Manhattan intellectual, and she had laughed: how was it possible that she could love a man so ill-humoured, so ill-favoured, as he? But the answer was she didn't; in fact she disliked him but at least she didn't associate him with resignation and despair. She feared her husband; she was not afraid of Dr. B. Still, it was her husband she loved.

Why do we instantly classify this as fictional discourse? The answer, of course, because the narrative is focused through a character who is not the unspoken "I" from which the discourse originates, though that invisible narrator subtly intensifies the contradictions, contradictions, contradictions, and surprising avowals of his exposition, producing that harmonious balance of identification and detachment—engrossing without being disturbing—characteristic of certain kind of sophisticated modern short story writing (one

especially associated with the New Yorker, where the young Capote learnt his craft). In principle, there is no reason why this should not be an example of the New Journalism, applying rhetorical techniques perfected in the short story to the depiction of a real person; but the absence of explicit clues to the historicity of the woman (a well-known name, for example), and the intensely confidential, compromising nature of the subject matter, makes this inherently unlikely. Only fictional discourse usually claims this familiarity with the shameful and absurd secrets of another's erotic life; and we read this text unhesitatingly, therefore, as fiction.

The other short pieces in *Music for Chameleons* are all, in one way or another, autobiographical in mode: the source of the narrative is an "I" specifically identified as Truman Capote himself, and he functions as an "actant" as well as a narrator. Some of the pieces are anecdotes from his past; for instance, "Dandelion", a memory of his Deep South childhood, of his desperate and reckless attempt to bribe a local "witch" to make him into a girl; or "Lamp in a Window", in which the fairy-tale benevolence of an old lady who generously gives him shelter at night in a remote country place is given a grotesque twist by the discovery that her deep-freeze is packed with dead cats, her former pets. The latter part of the collection consists of "conversational portraits" in dialogue form; an interview with Robert Beausoleil, an associate of Charles Manson, an afternoon spent with an off-duty Marilyn Monroe (whose language, if Capote is to be believed, was far from ladylike); a day spent accompanying a black (or, as she prefers to be called, coloured) cleaning woman as she visits her clients' empty New York apartments, forced by frequent inhalations of marijuana.

This last-mentioned piece is representative of Capote's "new writing" in the way it hesitates on the boundary between fact and fiction. One may believe that it is substantially true while suspecting that it has been improved by art. There is something suspiciously literary about the gradation in dramatic interest of the three visits Mary Sanchez and Capote make to the three apartments (three is itself, frequently, the sacred number of man estranged from his wife, littered with countless empty vodka miniatures (it turns out that he is an airline pilot—"O my God", says Capote, a frequent air-traveller). The second apartment belongs to a neurotic, self-righteous, and somewhat of a man estranged from his wife, littered with countless empty vodka miniatures (it turns out that he is an airline pilot—"O my God", says Capote, a frequent air-traveller). The third apartment, Capote and his companion, now high on klonopin, Mary's powerful grand raid the refrigerator of the *quiffy* Mr and Mrs Berkowitz, and are interrupted by the middle of a bacchanalian dance by the outraged owners, who turn up just a little too neatly on time. Still, it is an enthralling and touching story, which communicates vividly the charwoman's view of the underside of her clients' lives and at the same time draws a warm and convincing portrait of the woman herself.

It would still stand up as a text if it were demonstrated that it was entirely fictitious—and that seems to be the final criterion of value in writing of this kind. However much of an emotional charge it may derive from the reader's belief that he is reading a true story—and in cases like *In Cold Blood* and *The Executioner's Song* that is considerable—the text should not ultimately depend on such extra-textual support to obtain our "willing suspension of disbelief". George Orwell's essay "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant" are classic examples of the kind of text that should not, ultimately, depend on such extra-textual support to obtain our "willing suspension of disbelief". Orwell's "A Hanging" is a classic example of the kind of text that should not, ultimately, depend on such extra-textual support to obtain our "willing suspension of disbelief". Orwell's "A Hanging" is a classic example of the kind of text that should not, ultimately, depend on such extra-textual support to obtain our "willing suspension of disbelief".

as it claims to be, a work of non-fiction, because as a work of fiction it would not rate very high.

"Handcarved Coffins" begins in a motel room in an unidentified small town in a "Western State", in March 1975. The narrator, Truman Capote, is talking to a detective, Jake Pepper, from the State Bureau of Investigation, who has been investigating, for the past five years, a series of bizarre and baffling murders in the community. Capote explains that he has been in contact with Pepper by telephone for most of this time, but has come now to the scene of the crime to get the whole story.

And so it was that I found myself one cold March night sitting with Jake Pepper in his motel room on the wintry, windswept outskirts of this forgotten little Western town. Actually, the room was pleasant, cosy; after all, it had been Jake's home for about five years...

Devotees of Conan Doyle will recognize here a condensation of some characteristic features of the Sherlock Holmes stories. These stories have been subjected to illuminating structural analysis by, among others, the Soviet semiotician, Yuri Scheglov and L. M. O'Toole, Reader at the University of Essex; and in what follows I am indebted to the latter's article, "Analytic and Synthetic Approaches to Narrative

Structure: Sherlock Holmes and 'The Sussex Vampire'" (in *Style and Structure in Literature*, ed. Roger Fowler, Blackwell, Oxford, 1977). As Scheglov points out, the Sherlock Holmes stories have a very predictable structure of narrative sequences, invariably beginning with a first report of the mystery to be solved in the cosy intimacy of the fog-shrouded Baker Street flat, followed by a visit to the scene of the crime, usually the well-appointed country house of some member of the upper classes, for further investigation of, and perhaps a new development in, the enigma. The atmospheric contrast between cosy interiors and threatening or inclement exteriors as a context for the investigation is important, because the genre, according to Scheglov, depends on a binary opposition between Security and Adventure for its appeal:

It is the writer's task to look for conditions which will permit the foreground heroes (i.e. Holmes and Watson) simultaneously to receive a physical and spiritual "shock" by getting involved in all kinds of dramas and adventures, and yet not to quit their normal element, not to yield in any way their accustomed comforts, to enjoy full immunity... This world, uniting the terrifying and the safe, movement with tranquillity, discomfort with comfort,

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offers a combination of conditions in which the most sober of citizens would agree, would even volunteer, to have adventures and to come face to face with danger and horrors and so on.

Capote has of course, whether consciously or intuitively, subtly modified and combined the components of the model: thus Capote himself in one way performs the function of Holmes—the outsider who is brought to the scene of the crime by a baffled client; but the client in this case is the detective, who thinks he has solved the crime but cannot bring the culprit to book. In relation to Pepper, therefore, Capote also plays the part of Watson, Holmes's naïve "foe," and the chronicler of the adventure.

O'Toole, while readily accepting the aptness of the *Security/Adventure* antithesis to the Holmes stories, regards it as one realization of a deeper structural opposition between Reason and the Irrational—Holmes's feats of detection representing the "triumph of the former over the latter. In either formulation, the opposition is neatly encapsulated in the oxymoronic title of the story O'Toole analyses, "The Sussex Vampire," in which the associations of the Home Counties (Security, Reason) collide shockingly with those of Transylvania (Adventure, the Irrational) in a single phrase. Capote's title is a similar oxymoron, the homely, pleasant art-and-craft connotations of "handcarved" unexpectedly modifying the menacing and ominous "coffins." And the sequence of violent deaths that Jake Pepper relates to Truman Capote, as a hard wind whipping the window announced that winter was still with us, is certainly a challenge to reason:

JAKE: Eight murders, and not a single clue that would link the victims together to produce some semblance of a motive. Nothing. Except those three little hand-carved coffins. I said to myself: No! No, it can't be! There's a mind behind all this, a reason.

The first to die were a married couple called Roberts, a lawyer and his wife who worked for him. One day they received through the mail a miniature coffin carved from balsam wood, containing a snapshot of themselves. A month later, getting into their car one sunny morning to drive to an office, they were attacked by amphetamine-injected rattlesnakes. They were found shut inside the car, hideously swollen and disfigured. Here the first spasm of empirical doubt makes itself felt. The account implies that both people, entering the car simultaneously from opposite sides, got inside and shut both doors before either of them noticed the amphetamine-crazed snakes. That seems improbable, to say the least.

Later in the text we are told that the Roberts died on September 5, 1970. Doing a little detective work of my own, I discovered that that date fell on a Saturday. I suppose it is possible that a country town lawyer and his wife-associate might go to their office on a Saturday morning, though it seems unlikely; less likely still that a murderer, setting a trap for them as they leave for work, should choose a Saturday, rather than an ordinary weekday, for the attempt.

Three months later, a couple called Baxter were burned to death in their cellar, with two chance guests, by an act of arson. It was not known whether they had received a coffin. But Clem Anderson, an old college friend of Jake's, did receive one, with a picture of himself driving his homestead jeep, and was frightened by it. He was unable to think what connection he might have with the other victims until one evening he tells Jake that it might have something to do with the local river. But the next day, before he has time to supply this hint, he is dead, decapitated by a sharpened wire strung across the road along which he drives home in his jeep, a vehicle without superstructure or windshield.

Apart from the implausibility of the method of killing working with such perfect precision, and the paternity of its timing, the persons bound between Jake and Anderson provides a suspiciously literary motivation for Jake's increasingly agonized commitment to solving the mystery. The next victim, however, is a rather unsavoury character, a doctor poisoned by picturing his own favourite indignation, a woman. At this point in his narrative, Capote returns to Capote, the birth of the man he depicts. Quinlan. After reading about a maniacal assassin by Mark Twain, Jake Pepper exclaims: "Detectable. Malicious. A nasty mind. Yes, but that

describes Quinlan perfectly." There must be some superstition about the letter "Q," so many nasty, malicious, detestable characters in literature have names that begin with it: Quilp, Quint, Quilly. Jake Pepper's name has appropriately contrasting connotations—country-and-western homeliness, a warm but volatile temperament.

Having mentioned the suspect's name, Jake Pepper refuses to proceed any further with his narrative until the next day, when he has arranged to take Truman Capote to meet a woman called Addie Mason in the town. Thus Capote's, and vicariously the reader's, curiosity and suspense are prolonged. The scene shifts to the comfortable house of Addie, a spinster schoolmistress, and her widowed sister (this shift corresponds to the movement from Baker Street to the country in the Sherlock Holmes stories). A sumptuous meal is served, and again an atmospheric contrast is evoked between the cosy interior and the intruder, the man for whom (somewhere) the murderer lurks: "Snow, fluttering at the windows like torn lace curtains, emphasized the comforts of the room, the warmth of the fire, the redness of the wine." Addie describes to Capote how she received a coffin, sought the help of Jake Pepper, and worked out the connection between herself and the other victims: all had been members of a local committee formed to adjudicate on a proposal to divert the local river for irrigation purposes. "The property owner who lost most by their approval of the scheme was Robert Quinlan.

As this narrative proceeds, Truman Capote infers that Jake and Addie are in love, and he learns shortly after that they plan to marry. Thus the threatened next victim of the murderer whom Jake is pursuing is the very person dearest to him in the world. This doubling of the motivation, superimposing a romantic theme on top of the law-and-order theme, is typical of traditional prose fiction, of what is sometimes called the classic realist text. It is the literary equivalent of Freudian "over-determination," and betrays an anxiety on the author's part to hold the reader's interest at all costs, by providing an excess of reasons for our sympathetic identification with the "good" characters. It comes as no surprise to discover that, in contrast to Addie's homely look, in Quinlan's handsome, sexually, Quinlan's wife is embezzled, alcoholic, and half-Spanish; or, later, that he has a mistress and four illegitimate children.

Pepper soon drives Capote out to Quinlan's ranch. It seems that in spite of all the grounds for suspicion, Pepper has not succeeded in convincing his superior that Quinlan is the murderer. Quinlan is being protected by powerful friends in the State government. Accordingly, Pepper is reduced to making social visits to Quinlan, hoping to trick him into making a damaging admission, and he takes Capote out to the ranch for the purpose. This corresponds to the sequence of confrontations and unmasking the villain in the classic archetype. As Capote is introduced to Quinlan,

the sight of him startled me. I knew Mr. Quinlan. I was positive, I would have sworn on my own heart that I had known him, and undoubtedly long ago, and I had encountered Robert Harley Quinlan, and that together we had, in fact, shared an alarming experience, an adventure so disturbing, memory had kindly submerged it.

This is a coincidence, so outrageously improbable that the reader's credulity could survive it. However, as we read on, we discover that Quinlan merely reminds Capote of a very similar man, a fanatical religious preacher in the Deep South who terrified the five-year-old Capote by trying to baptize him by immersion. Having looked the reader may now be reassured to trust the tale, not only in this particular, but in all others—that, I take it, is the author's hope. The sequence also motivates Capote's tentative agreement with Jake's identification of Quinlan as the murderer.

Quinlan, however, avoids giving away clinching proof, and Pepper, obsessed with the desire to catch him, is constrained to use his beloved fiancée as bait, instead of removing her from danger. Truman Capote goes to Europe for a vacation, and his return is delayed. When he finally gets back he learns that Addie has drowned two days before her wedding day—suddenly, according to the story.

verdict. Jake is of course convinced that Quinlan was responsible, though Truman Capote, for reasons that are not entirely clear, is not. This causes an estrangement between the two men, as Jake, in creating his isolated and on the edge of breakdown, bangs his head against the brick wall of public scepticism and indifference. The narrative frays out into a series of notes and jottings from Capote's diary covering a number of years, until eventually Jake is due for retirement, his quest unfulfilled. Truman Capote travels to the small Western town for a farewell reunion, and then makes a solitary visit to the Quinlan ranch. There he finds Quinlan fishing his river, thigh-deep in water, like the fanatical preacher, and like him also in being convinced of the consonance of his own will and God's:

"The way I look at it is this: It was the hand of God. He raised his own hand, and the river, viewed between his spread fingers, seemed to weave between them like a dark ribbon. 'God's work. His will.'"

That is how the story ends; the image of the river, delicately alluding to the classical mythology of the Styx and the Fates, offers an aesthetic conclusion in place of a narrative resolution of the plot. In this respect, of course, "Hand-carved Coffins" deviates radically from the classic detective story, in which all mystery is dispersed, Reason triumphs over the Irrational, and Right over Wrong. "Hand-carved Coffins" ends with the curiously allusions which should put the reader on his guard, especially in this passage:

TC: *A Coffin For Dimitrios. JAKE: What say?*
TC: A book by Eric Ambler. A thriller.

JAKE: Fiction? (I nodded; he grimaced.) You really read that junk?
TC: Graham Greene was a first-class writer. Until the Vatican grabbed him. After that, he never wrote anything as good as *Brighton Rock*. I like Agatha Christie, love her. And Raymond Chandler is a great stylist, a poet. Even if his plots are a mess.

JAKE: Junk. These guys are just daydreamers—squawking types, writer and jerk themselves off, that's all they do.

There is no such book as *A Coffin For Dimitrios* by Eric Ambler, though he did write one called *The Mask of Dimitrios* (which has no miniature coffins in it, though it does involve a thriller writer who becomes involved in a "real" murder mystery through a policeman acquaintance). Whether this title

The accosters' last stand

By George Craig

RAYMOND QUENEAU: *We always treat women too well*. Translated by Barbara Wright. 174pp. Calder. £8.95. 0 7145 3687 3

When a clever man translates into humour his fascination with the possibilities of words (and few writers have done so as often and as engagingly as Raymond Queneau) we tend, gratefully, if a little too soon, to assume that we know where we are: in the world of what are called language-games. Secure in our knowledge, we set aside all questions of content and charge. This is a danger which Queneau's *We always treat women too well* illustrates with peculiar sharpness.

A post office, carefully plotted on the map of Dublin streets and monuments in the time of George V, has been forcibly taken over by a bunch of characters with strangely familiar names: among them Corry Kelleher, Matt Dillon, Larry O'Rourke and Chris Callahan. But of course it is Bloomsday a few years on and "anything can happen and probably will" (the very mention of Joyce justifying, for the translator, and every kind of word-play). Then, again, the novelist has chosen, for his fiction, the activities of an armed gang which holds prisoner a frightened (although in this case not necessarily respectable) virgin. It

reader would believe that "Hand-carved Coffins" was a true story for a moment if it were not subtitled a "nonfiction account" (a phrase that borrows considerably from the precedent of the same author's *In Cold Blood*) and described as a "true story" by its publishers—for one does not expect dust-jacket blurbs to lie. I thought it prudent to inquire of the British and American publishers whether they had any evidence to support this assertion, and received courteous but guarded replies to the effect that they had relied exclusively on the assurances of the author. They have been very trusting. Of course, as a property, "Handcarved Coffins" is worth a lot more as a true story than as a work of fiction; which is to say that as a work of literature with its serious pretensions it is worth very little. We may be interested by the spectacle of literature imitating bad art, but not by bad art (i.e. over-familiar, exhausted conventions) proposing to imitate life.

Capote would, I suppose, justify his proceeding as a kind of hoax, or game with the reader; and there are certainly several clues in the text to this effect. The narrator, Truman Capote, is, for instance, always ahead of the reader in voicing doubts about the plausibility of the story. "The amazing thing is," he says to Jake at the outset, "nobody seems to know anything about this case. It had almost no publicity." His comment on the murder of Tim Anderson is "preposterous." There are several literary allusions which should put the reader on his guard, especially in this passage:

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TC: A book by Eric Ambler. A thriller.

JAKE: Fiction? (I nodded; he grimaced.) You really read that junk?

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There is no such book as *A Coffin For Dimitrios* by Eric Ambler, though he did write one called *The Mask of Dimitrios* (which has no miniature coffins in it, though it does involve a thriller writer who becomes involved in a "real" murder mystery through a policeman acquaintance). Whether this title

appears fairly conclusively, that this must be a pastiche of the genre exemplified by *No Orchids for Miss Blomfield*—killings, meltings and sexual outrage. There is also, finally, the blank-check notion of "black humour".

Queneau's seven armed robbers storm a post office on the corner of O'Connell Bridge; a few hundred yards from the better-known one. They shoot the commissionaire and the superintendent, driving out the other employees with boot and rifle. The section leader telephones at once answered; the first stage of the Rising is over. The insurgents, elated and nervous, prepare for the British counter-attack. This comes first from troops regrouped nearby, later from a warship ordered to bombard the pocket of resistance. Finally, the single ruthless enemy hidden within the post office itself. We read by account of the rebels' last stand and of their fading before an assault that comes from in front and from behind, from above and below. Nothing and no-one is left intact.

Assumptions that all this must be "satirical pastiche" or "inspired romp" block access to real difficulties—and real delights. Why Ireland and 1916? Why is the leader of the (rebel) band called John McCormack? And why is his battle-cry "Finnegans Wake"? Even more to the point, what was the pseudonym of the great player-for-safety, intending to do in issuing the novel? It is a novel that Flann O'Brien would surely have enjoyed.

is an intentional or Freudian allusion, it seems a significant clue that the origins of "Handcarved Coffins" are in fiction rather than in fact, as does the allusion to Agatha Christie, whose *Ten Little Niggers* (originally *Ten Little Niggers*) has a similar so-many-down-so-many-go plot. The muddled reference to Graham Greene (he was converted to Roman Catholicism, if that is what is meant by "grabbed by the Vatican" in 1926; *Brighton Rock*, 1938, was in fact the first of his novels to deal explicitly with Catholicism; his next novel, *The Power and the Glory*, was actually condemned by the Holy Office) is of less obvious relevance. But the final derisive comment on writers of fiction is plainly a nudge aimed at the credulous reader. Only the schematic format conceals the author's grin.

The title story of *Music for Chamelons* describes a conversation between Truman Capote and a patrician lady of Martinique. Chamelons scamper about the terrace where they sit, slipping absinthe-lavoured soda. She comments: "Such exceptional creatures. The way they change colour. . . . And did you know they are very fond of music. . . . You don't believe me? . . . She goes to the piano in her 'cool, Caribbean saloon' and begins to play. Sure enough, the chamelons accumulate at her feet. 'A sensitive, aboriginal audience for the music.' But of course this 'proof' is purely a literary illusion, dependent on the credibility of Capote's own text. As if to reinforce the point, he himself claims a few lines later to have seen ghosts in Haiti in broad daylight, "picking bugs off coffee plants". She accepts this as fact. *Music for Chamelons* is indeed full of all stories asking to be accepted as fact, full of characters who enjoy testing each other's credulity, and their own narrative persuasiveness. Thus Marilyn Monroe tells Truman Capote a story about Errol Flynn taking his penis out of his fly at a party and thumping out the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner" with it on the piano, while he counters with a reminiscence of having once seduced Flynn. "That's not much of a story," says Marilyn. "Not worth mine—not by a long shot." By "her" story she means not the one about Flynn, but the one about herself and Arthur Miller, which Capote is trying to wink out of her. But by "worth" she means the equivalent in scandalous truth or equivalent in narrative interest, the "pleasure of the text". That is the distinction Capote tests the reader with throughout *Music for Chamelons*, thus making out of some fairly lightweight writing, a book that continuously beguiles, and that lingers in the mind.

answers to these questions. But Queneau offers full and discerning answers.

He does this partly by turning the questions back to us: if we can accept that, in order for the miniature hero of a Western to get the girl in white, a couple of dozen Indians have to be shot off their horses, why can't we do the same or similar with an insurance? He does it also by exploring the gap between ideological certainty and personal doubt. For if anything is being mocked in the novel, it is the pretension to know, Queneau's wide sureness of linguistic touch and his compassionate tone remind us, humbly and humbly, that heroism, brutality, devotion and love itself are labels; names that mark a reality all right, but from the outside. The inside, or what these events feel like to their protagonists, asserts a different reality, one which coincides with the other only at moments and as if by accident. If armed insurance seems to take us inevitably towards Truman, we've soon shown that there's more than a trick up Errol's sleeve. If, up at street level in the little post office, history is laying a new course, down at the Ladies a terrible beauty is lurking, about to come and put her hand on the reader.

Obecancy and tenderness, subtlety and violence: for readers not immediately put off by the mixture, there is in Queneau's novel the chance of a deliciously moving, enormously funny scene. The translator's boldness in issuing the novel is a novel that Flann O'Brien would surely have enjoyed.

Assumptions that all this must be "satirical pastiche" or "inspired romp" block access to real difficulties—and real delights. Why Ireland and 1916? Why is the leader of the (rebel) band called John McCormack? And why is his battle-cry "Finnegans Wake"? Even more to the point, what was the pseudonym of the great player-for-safety, intending to do in issuing the novel? It is a novel that Flann O'Brien would surely have enjoyed.

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Bald-headed into battle

By John Keegan

JOHN TERRAINE:

The Smoke and the Fire
Myths and Anti-Myths of War 1961-1945
240pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.
0 283 98701 4

John Terraine ploughs a lonely furrow. Alone among practising military historians, he is resolved to present the First World War (which is what this book is about, despite the subtitle) as something to be confronted and understood rather than evaded or deplored. Gentler souls, with a foothold in social or cultural history, may regret the fits it wrote to the belle époque, their generalist colleagues bewail its catastrophic political consequences, the strategic professionals recoil from its brutal distortion of the soldier's craft. He will have none of it. Like the war itself, he bestrides the years 1914-18, claiming them for his own and insisting that all who pass that way must learn to turn the Unpleasant Truth into his own basiliak stare. He has had to develop a thick skin as well as a hard eye, for his views are not merely unfashionable: they are provocatively uncomfortable, provocative because he has the gift of disputation, uncomfortable because he is often right, or at least less wrong than his opponents.

Terraine and his adversaries have tussled over a wide range of issues, some large, some small, in the twenty years he has been writing about the war. The largest stir he caused was with his life of Haig, whose reputation he attempted not merely to rescue, in itself a daunting task, but to transform. Patient work with documentary sources produced a portrait of the commander of the BEF which

undoubtedly had authority; and, over time, patience has had its effect. Few Haig-haters, it is true, have been brought to like the field-marshal, and it is not altogether certain that even his biographer does. But it is not nowadays uncommon to hear it said, however grudgingly, that Haig was no worse a general than many of his contemporaries, while the task he faced was a good deal less susceptible to intellectual or imaginative solutions than has commonly been allowed. Lloyd George's reputation as a war leader has been dented by John Terraine's demonstration of his strategic naivety, readiness to be impressed by untold generals' promises and fondness for the backstairs deal in military as well as in political affairs. Postscript: Haig now appears less awful as a battle commander, but he has shown it to be less costly than the Somme, and the Somme less pointless because he succeeded in diverting attention from its first, unspeakably horrible day.

But he now seems to have tired of making the sort of step-by-step advances in the history of the war which Haig bound the BEF in, claiming them for his own and insisting that all who pass that way must learn to turn the Unpleasant Truth into his own basiliak stare. He has had to develop a thick skin as well as a hard eye, for his views are not merely unfashionable: they are provocatively uncomfortable, provocative because he has the gift of disputation, uncomfortable because he is often right, or at least less wrong than his opponents.

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Will they still peddle the idea that there was some "way" to the Western Front? Then please show where, and also adduce examples of other major wars won by subsidiary operations. Do they believe that the British high command flung away the Kitchener armies, flower of the nation, in 1916, for no measurable reason? Count Germany's casualties on the Somme and read her high command's lament for them.

Are we still to accept that the machine-gun was the great killer, but that Haig denigrated its effectiveness? Study the hospital statistics and note that sixty per cent of wounds were caused by shellfire, but also note that Haig constantly pressed for more machine-guns. Did he spurn the idea of the tank and miss those which were pressed upon him? His private diaries reveal his enthusiasm for the prototype and eagerness to see it produced in number; the production model's imperfections explain its lack of decisive effect. Were all British generals cavalrymen, with a lip and an eye for horseflesh? Only eight of the "top twenty-seven" were from the cavalry and, of them, the topmost were the most efficient and innovative of the war. Monash, the Australian Jew, darling of the Haig-haters, was not a protégé, but a whole war in itself, both in method and object. Demonstrate another method which might have worked. And contemplate the terms imposed by the Germans on those countries, like Russia, Serbia and Romania, which they did best.

Hard pounding this, and a lot of the shots go home. The machine-gun point is accurate, if of little consequence to the statistically unimpaired. The tank point is right in every respect. Were it only for his epousal of the invention, Haig would stand tall beside Ludendorff, whose persistence in traditional

ways of warfare was stubborn to the point of obtuseness. The atrocity stories are very properly resurrected. Some German formations undoubtedly behaved with a crazy savagery in the first weeks of the war, particularly in Belgium which by comparison with the Fatherland, was indeed poor and little. And the terms of the treaty of Erest-Lovsk, which gave Germany as much of Russia as Hitler took by conquest in 1941-42, bear very serious thinking about by anyone who dismisses the First World War as "unnecessary", particularly if we accept Fritz Fischer's argument that they were duplicit in their war aims from the beginning (not, curiously, one that the author cites to support his case).

But some of the shots are wide of the mark. Juggle with the figures how you like, the British army of 1914-18 was dominated by the cavalry, which almost monopolized the really important appointments. The effect of such a sequestration may not have been all bad, for there was much talent in the cavalry. But cannot have been all good, any more than it was to confide the Grand Fleet to gunnery specialists or the archbishopric to Romanians. By 1914 the cavalry club, like any institution which hears time's winged chariot hurrying near, had become committed to defending a thoroughly bad position by an aggressive denial of its weakness. A sharing of the spoils which the war brought helped to disguise its further erosion, for, though the tactical facts showed that the warhorse was a dead duck, the consequences for any professional who deplored the cavalry were normally held by cavalrymen—were too punitive to be risked. The climate of silence, thus enforced, heightened resentments in an army already too divided by regimental totemism into "Them and Us"; and the harmful effects of the rancours, thus gener-

ated, persisted into the Second World War.

The central issue is, however, larger than the status and putative influence of a relatively small branch in a single combatant army. It turns on the war itself and what we ought to feel about it. It is no good, in the author's view, trying to forget the war, pretend it didn't happen or dismiss it as an aberration. It did happen and is one of a piece with the wars which preceded and followed it, particularly the American Civil War and the Second World War. These are what he calls the "mass wars", or, more strictly in his scheme of things, the salient events in the era of mass warfare. That the era coincides with a dozen other developments—some revolutionary, in human life—economic, political, scientific, intellectual—is, if not irrelevant, the of secondary importance. For it is mass warfare which defines the context of our past 100 years and sets the standards by which any of its events must be measured. It is not for human beings to complain that Verdun makes a mockery of the pursuit of happiness, the schlemale of the right to life, the trenches of the principle of liberty. The war's the thing. And, if we see clear, we will observe that it was less nasty than the consequences of not fighting it. Bloody battles? But the Europe of 1914 had no right to expect anything else, had it paid attention to what happened at Shiloh or Gettysburg. Terrible casualties? Not really a bad, if we count the totals of the Second World War. Futile? Revisionists are now trying that held on the American Civil War, unfairly admitted by men of sense as an unavoidable, even necessary conflict, as Lincoln pointed out in his "half-slave, half-free" speech before the war ever began. No beneficiaries? Tell that to the Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Balkan Arabs.

From exhaustion to isolationism

By John Hackett

BRIAN BOND:

British Military Policy between the Two World Wars
419pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £16.
0 19 82244 8

This scholarly and readable book by Brian Bond, reader in war studies in King's College London, is very welcome. It treats its subject principally from the point of view of the army but does much to clarify events and issues which are not yet and probably never can be perfectly clear.

The year 1918 saw an exhausted Britain, only too glad to turn its back on the tragedy and waste of the war years, with no further military threat in sight in Europe but with increased imperial commitments elsewhere. Public opinion at home, with strong pacifist undertones, inclined to an indifference even a hostility, towards the armed services which was to persist for twenty years, the army as the least colourful and the least obviously needed of the three, being the least popular. From

August, 1919, until 1932, British defence policy was based on the "Ten-Year Rule"—that the British Empire would not be involved in a major war against a great power for ten years and that the function of the armed services would be home defence and imperial policing, with no requirement for an expeditionary field force. It is hardly surprising that the "return to real soldiering" in the post-1918 army resulted in a professional lethargy inimical to modernization. The Cardwell system, designed to facilitate reliefs of overseas imperial garrisons, again dominated an army in which the regimental system and the finance branch dominated the War Office. Regimental life was slow and pleasant, with ample time for those of us who wished to use it to do other things; promotion moved at a snail's pace and "Bugle's Tune" was almost the rule for senior appointments. All this would be upset when Hore-Bellisha, with Liddell-Hart at his elbow, almost turned the service inside out in 1937, but that was a long way off.

Service chiefs, though often hide-bound in their attitudes and obsessed with the defence of India, to which they saw a potent threat from the Soviet Union, were from the late 1920s not unaware of another danger, from a secretly re-arming Germany, but their political masters were not only blind to this well.

In the political, social and economic climate of the time, modernization of the British Army was bound to suffer. Notwithstanding the activities of a handful of progressive officers such as Fuller and Martel, Britain's lead in mechanized and armoured forces, once pronounced, had by the early 1930s been thrown away. In the first large-scale manoeuvres carried out since 1914, in September, 1925, attempts were made, it is true, to try out new concepts of mechanized warfare, and an "Experimental Mechanized Force" was formed at Tidworth in 1927. The latter, however, remained the Armoured Force, was disbanded in 1929 and the development of offensive armoured warfare, in which the Germans were later to achieve the British as their masters.

took second place to the slow motorization of the conventional army, cavalry, infantry, and artillery. When Britain went to war in September, 1939, her small field force was almost completely motorized (the only European army, in fact, which this could be said) but her only armoured division could not possibly be got ready before mid-1940, while Germany was already able to display air with appropriate air support in Poland. We had, it is true, formed a Mobile Force in Egypt in 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis, the basis of what was to become the most famous of British "Desert Rats", but those of us who were in it at the time tended to refer to it as "the immobile Force".

Delay in modernization was increased by confusion over the army's true role. Opposition to a Continental commitment was strong, not least in the influential person of Liddell-Hart. Even when it was reluctantly conceded, with Germany heavily and rapidly rearming, that a Field Force would be necessary, the belief was still held, with Liddell-Hart as its chief proponent, that a limited liability. On the taken assumption that a war with Germany would open with violently destructive bombing of the British Isles, the Air Defence of Great Britain (ADGB) was given top priority over all other defence requirements, with the Treasury strongly backing Chamberlain's and exercising an influence over national ground strategy which remains truly astounding.

The strategic outlook of the Government at the end of 1937, with Liddell-Hart's powerful support from the desk at *The Times*, was "essentially isolationist and imperialist". It is an ironic fact, as the author points out, in a pro-Liddell-Hart's thinking and his very considerable influence on the management of Britain's defence, that the creation of the armoured force, so strongly and ably supported, was only justified under the Continental commitment he consistently rejected.

The doctrine of limited liability in the war that threatened against Germany, powerfully propounded by Chamberlain as Prime Minister in March 1938, survived until the end of the year, when Hore-Bellisha came down in favour of a field force, modest though in all conceits and with little time to put it together, to go to the immediate aid of France, in the event of an attack by Germany. If this had happened even a year or two earlier history might almost certainly have been different.

Dr Bond's judgments on personalities are clear, balanced and well documented. His concern is with policies rather than party politics, upon which, highly important though they were, he wisely makes virtually no comment. Tory politicians stand condemned on the record, for the most part, for their myopic view of the world scene, their refusal to accept the reality of a fascist threat, their rejection of a Continental commitment until it was too late to make adequate preparation to meet it, and their timidity in the face of public pacifism. Dismal though their record is, however, that of the left is far worse, in spite of attempts to whitewash it in what has been called a "cynical falsification of history" in such books as *Guilt Men*. In Britain, we are asked to believe, only the true and fearless Left was prepared to fight fascism wherever it raised its head—but the country was to do this without troops or weapons. All attempts to rearm while there was still time were ruthlessly opposed by the Labour Party, usually with Liberal support. When Hitler occupied Prague and the rumour of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Chamberlain's last illusions were shattered, but the trade unions, as Bond points out, were still adamantly opposed to conscription, without which no effective defence effort was possible.

Earlier on there was an even more striking example of the outlook of the Left. Critical battles, and the margin in the Battle of Britain was to be a very narrow one indeed. It was difficult enough to secure adequate provision of essential fighter aircraft, particularly

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The role of invalid

By Phyllis Grosskurth

JEAN STROUSE:

Alice James
A Biography
367pp. Cape. £9.95.
0 224 01436 6

Alice James's life was a prolonged plea for annihilation. From an early age she realized that her existence was to be like a deep forest pool, untroubled by wind or glancing sunlight, an existence in which all creative energy would be stifled. It is a haunting, puzzling, disturbing story, and it could have been told only by a biographer gifted, like Jean Strouse, with a remarkably sensitive intelligence.

The only daughter and youngest of Henry James, Sr's five children was nurtured in the enveloping atmosphere of a family which recorded every twinge of sensation. Her father, whose leg had to be amputated at an early age, discovered as a result that physical disability was the most assured means of securing his own father's devoted attention. He in turn married a pious woman and subsequently devoted his life to imbuing his children with the notion that to be extraordinary was to be both good and beautiful. Achievement would be measured by the quality of response to life. James was something of an aesthetic Bentham in his emphasis on the intensity and nature of sensation. His preoccupation was an epicurean folly amid the domesticized conventions of late nineteenth-century America, and it was only possible in a situation in which money was not a pressing concern. Nevertheless, the James children could not entirely insulate themselves from its utilitarian implications, and the failures—Garth, Robertson and Alice—were punished with almost diabolical ruthlessness.

In 1855, when Alice was seven, James père decided that New York could not provide the education essential for the exquisite refine-

ment of the sensibilities of his brood. And so they became hotel children, moving from London to Paris to Geneva, accompanied by successive retainers. As far as Alice was concerned, her education was "accidental" in that it was not her education that was of any importance. She was left behind with mother, aunt, or governess, while her brothers were scurried off to schools and museums. Alice's father was attentive only to the instruction of his boys, and in late life Alice wondered whether "If I had any education, I should be more, or less, of a fool than I am". Yet she was never precisely sure that she was a fool. Her father might address her as "heirress of the paternal wit and of the maternal witicism" and her brothers shared with her a sense of the condescension of affection: it was a double bind since it was both flattering and demeaning. Only with Henry Jr did she find close companionship, a kinship of androgynous character, and in the house, the one told by his father that "Mother loves you more than all her other progeny"—a role which Alice, within her historical context, might not unnaturally have expected to assume.

In 1860 the first part of the sonorous education came to an end when the family returned to an America riven by civil war. The

two younger boys joined the Union forces, patriotic acts which never seemed to measure up to the elusive pursuits of William and Henry. But at least they were participating in something active whereas Alice was not poor enough to work in a factory or old enough to volunteer for nursing or relief work in army hospitals. At thirteen she observed the need "to clothe oneself in neutral tints, walk by still waters, and possess one's soul in silence". Close friendships were the only outlet available to her in a city which Henry James later described as "occupied almost exclusively by women. The Boston Sewing Bee and later the Society to Encourage Studies at Home were her alternatives to the sonorous education.

It was during this period of emerging womanhood that Alice began to manifest the signs of poor health that were to plague her for the rest of her life. It was not entirely fortuitous that about this time an American neurologist, George Beard, gave the name "neurasthenia" to a wide range of inexplicable female complaints. Among the fifty symptoms covered by the term, Beard listed fainting, lassitude, crying fits, and a general sense of hopelessness. Physicians found it difficult to localize any specific organic disorder for the complex of complaints characterized by a resistance to medicinal remedies. In the words of Nathan

G. Hale in *Freud and the American Neurologist*, Weir Mitchell,

emphasized conflicts within individuals, who could not fulfil social norms, yet, because they had internalized them, could not consciously reject them. Hysteria sabotaged the "civilized" norm of refinement in two ways, by "fits", outbursts of emotion that directly violated it, or by incapacitating physical symptoms, which because they made a woman helpless, caricatured the very delicacy and softness she and American men had been taught to reverence.

Beard and Mitchell were the progenitors of a number of "asylums" for well-to-do, dissatisfied wives and edgy spinsters who were "cured" mainly by rest and escape from responsibility to an other world, a return to infantile dependency. Anticipating the problem from a different perspective, Beard and Mitchell anticipated by about thirty years Freud's psychoanalytical insights into the sexual origins of hysteria. Alice spent a large part of her life taking various institutional cures or, more frequently, being cared for by anxious friends and relatives. Alice and her illness became one and the same: through her malaise Alice was able to find the only self with which she could identify.

The Devil's Advice to Poets

Molt that skin! Lift that face!—you'll go far.
Grow like Proteus yet more bizarre.
In perpetual throes,
Majors metamorphose—
Only minors remain who they are.

X. J. Kennedy

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Edited by Stanley Sadie

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Shapes of things to come

By Graham Hough

D. H. LAWRENCE:
Apocalypse and the Writings on
Revelation
Edited by Mara Kalnins
200pp. Cambridge University Press.
£10.50.
0 521 22407 1

This volume marks the début of the Cambridge edition of the works of D. H. Lawrence, which is to come out in parallel with J. T. Boulton's admirable edition of the Letters. In his first volume, which appeared last year, Professor Boulton has set a high standard of scholarship, and with Warren Roberts he is also general editor of the Works. Earlier editions of the letters were incomplete, and short of the annotations necessary for their full understanding. The need for a new edition of the Works rests on different grounds. The problem with the novels and the other writings is textual. Nearly all existing editions are textually corrupt, the corruptions are of various kinds, and are sometimes very extensive. One can have one's doubts about the need for minute textual fuss over large-scale and loosely-knit works such as novels; but in this case there can be no doubt at all; an authoritative edition is needed.

The General Editor's preface gives the reasons in detail. Lawrence wrote carefully and revised often, yet he rarely compared one stage of revision with another and overlooked the errors of copyists and typists. He was often forced to accept stringent editing by publishers—readers—sometimes merely regularization of idiosyncratic style, but sometimes amounting to bowdlerization and censorship, not always acknowledged to the author. On occasions Lawrence produced texts for American publishers that were not identical with the English ones. His struggles with censorship are well known, but the extent of mere textual muddle is little suspected. The aim of this edition is to do what has not yet been done—to provide texts which can be determined to those that Lawrence himself would have wished to see printed.

This will involve close collation of extant manuscripts and typescripts, and comparison with early printed versions. Appendices will give early drafts and unpublished material. There will be a complete textual history of each work, and an introduction relating it to Lawrence's life and his other writings. Cumulatively this should give a history of Lawrence's working career far more complete than any we have yet had. In addition there are to be explanatory notes. One can imagine some sardonic comments from the Phoenix himself on this wealth of apparatus; but if a cat's cradle libel about the text is to be properly dismantled, the result must be a fairly elaborate web.

We can judge very well how it will work out from the present volume, though the textual problems in this case are not extensive. Besides *Apocalypse* itself there is a brief review of a book on Revelation by Dr John Oman, surviving only as a longish introduction to Frederick Carter's *The Dragon of the Apocalypse*, published in the *London Mercury* in July 1930. (For this there is an extant manuscript.) For *Apocalypse* itself there is both a manuscript and a typed copy with the last corrections, and additions made by Lawrence just before he died. The printed editions up to now have omitted and overcorrected, and this is the first accurate text. In addition there are three uncorrected manuscript fragments, all of considerable interest.

Apocalypse was Lawrence's last book, but it had a long history behind it. The editor's introduction gives a clear and useful account of the growth of Lawrence's concern with the Book of Revelation. It goes back to the Bible reading of his childhood, but was revived in 1923, when Lawrence, as a young man, sent Lawrence the manuscript of his book. The *Dragon of the Apocalypse* had autobiographical and biographical interest, as he made clear in his reply, was concerned with psychological rather

than cosmological symbolism, the microcosm rather than the macrocosm. All the same, he was stimulated by Carter's work, and he was not unfamiliar with his way of thinking. He had read a good deal of theosophy and occult literature in earlier years, and his own *Fantasy of the Unconscious* is a contribution to this mixed and turbid stream. Lawrence interested himself in getting Carter's book published and formed the idea of writing an introduction to it. But the correspondence lapsed, Lawrence went to Mexico, and the idea of an introductory essay on the *Apocalypse* was abandoned. Years later, when Lawrence was back in Europe in 1929, contact was resumed. Carter's original book no longer existed. A much abridged version of it had been published in 1926, but the possibility of a collaboration with Lawrence revived Carter's enthusiasm, and he began work on a revised and expanded *Dragon*. Lawrence too began work on a new introduction, and finished it by January 1930. In the event it was never used as such, but was posthumously published in *The London Mercury*.

The work with Carter had stimulated Lawrence's imagination to the extent that he now wished to make his own independent study of Revelation. At the same time he was reading Burnett's *Early Greek Philosophy* and developing a keen interest in the pre-Socratics. The two trains of thought began to fuse together. It seems a curious combination, but it has its rationale. Lawrence was eager to see a pre-Christian strain in Revelation—traces of a pagan "cosmos" religion, prior to the moralized, anthropomorphized religion of later Judaism and Christianity. He read not indulging wild fancies; he read scholarly commentaries on Revelation and found that the existence of such a strain was admitted. And to him the prime example of this earlier religious philosophy was to be found in the Ionian speculations he read about in Burnett's imaginative science of the cosmos, free from the sectarian bullying and the lust for vengeance that for Lawrence marred the poetry of Revelation. This meant that Lawrence's *Apocalypse* is a complicated piece of work with many layers, some reaching back to the chapel-going days of his childhood, some belonging to the last months before his death.

The present edition sets out the facts of the case very effectively. *Apocalypse* itself looks less isolated and anomalous when the ancillary writings are printed with it. Mara Kalnins's introduction is a model of what such things should be: it gives a lucid account of the genesis of Lawrence's apocalyptic writings, the place they occupied in his life, and

their relation to Carter's work. The text is edited once and for all. The apparatus is rather heavier than necessary in this particular case, but it will be necessary in later volumes, and it is no doubt desirable to establish a standard procedure for the whole edition. There is one blot on the present volume—the explanatory notes are of remarkable ineptitude. The introduction is normally and properly addressed to the educated general reader: the notes are addressed to one who has to be told who Homer and Dante are; and the cloud of unknowing in which the reader is deemed to be engulfed seems to have overtaken the editor too, for the explanations offered join the superfluous to the inadequate, and are sometimes plain wrong.

The presence of these notes is a matter of policy. The General Editor's preface speaks darkly of Lawrence's "obscure literary, historical, political and other allusions", and of readers "who are not native speakers of British English". This looks to me like a publisher's dream—of a book to be published as such, but was posthumously published in *The London Mercury*.

These unnatural alliances never succeed. However, *Apocalypse* is the first of a long series, of whose general merits we have every reason to feel assured. There will be plenty of time to adjust the sights in later volumes.

Freedom from Father Ireland

By Colin MacCabe

DOMINIC MANGIANIELLO:
Joyce's Politics
198pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£12.50.
0 7100 0537 7

For literary scholars and critics in the 1950s Joyce seemed the perfect twentieth-century author. If Pound's *Rascals*, Eliot's *Monarchism* and Yeats's involvement in the Irish State all implicated them too openly in politics, Joyce's remarkable silence throughout the 1920s and 1930s, when every author was being pressed to take a position, made him a prophet of the period. But, in fact, before the outbreak of the First World War and the Easter Rising, Joyce had been very actively interested in politics—the letters from Trieste and Rome show a remarkably close reading of the minutes of Irish nationalist politics and a considerable interest in the possibilities of socialism. Most im-

portantly of all, perhaps—as Dominic Manganelli's book makes clear—Joyce was very widely read in anarchist literature. If earlier Joyce scholarship concentrated on the apolitical Joyce, the political aspects of his thought have been a focus of attention in more recent years. Hélène Cixous's *The Exile of James Joyce* and Richard Ellmann's *The Consciousness of Joyce* are among the works to have drawn attention to the importance of this.

However, there has been no full-length book on Joyce's politics until this study by Dominic Manganelli, and as a work of literary scholarship it is an indispensable aid to the reading of Joyce. The sketchy aspects of his thought have been a focus of attention in more recent years. Hélène Cixous's *The Exile of James Joyce* and Richard Ellmann's *The Consciousness of Joyce* are among the works to have drawn attention to the importance of this.

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Christmas at Bristol

"To behold the death of a child—it is a suffering beyond conception"—
Sara Coleridge.

"Little Lamb & the snow would not melt on his limbs!"—S. T. Coleridge.

The baby coughed and coughed, clearing its lungs
as of some monstrous hawk let down by God.
Sam died fast in Germany—Es ist swar
ein recht gutes Bier; Wm and Dorothy
not to be found, anonymously siring
the Lucy poems. Ice packed the Elbe,
coldest winter for a hundred years. At one
Sun Feb 10, Berkeley convulsed and died.

Soldiers are blown up or run frantically
at death, but beaming them through
darkness. The old are slowly dragged
past the highest wave. Only the strong
joy of Wm hymns total eclipse.
Sara loved it, vein by vein, hands
picking out the gelid eyes of hope.
Through life she kept the dead birthday.

God is conceived in those High Renaissance
and virgin mothers: they are the rock
on which love hammers and is shod.
To give birth and see the branch sapless
or backed down—it is a suffering
beyond conception. All light is humbled,
blind snow-glare of the father and the son.

William Scammell



The Colombian painter Fernando Botero's "Mrs Rubens" (No 3), 1964, one of a series in which Botero re-creates Rubens's paintings of his second wife. The portrait comes from *Carter Rascals* by Botero (272pp, 50 colour illustrations. André Deutsch. £35. 0 85659 146 4).

The opinion machine

By Joseph Epstein

RONALD STEEL:
Walter Lippmann and the American
Century
667pp. The Bodley Head. £8.95.
0 370 30376 8

Ajodha could read but thought it more dignified to be read to, and Mr Blawie was sometimes called to the house to read, for a penny, a newspaper column of which Ajodha was particularly fond. This was a syndicated American column called *That Body of Yours* which dealt every day with a different danger to the human body. Ajodha listened with gravity, concern, alarm. It puzzled Mr Blawie that he should subject himself to this torment, and it amazed him that the writer, Dr Samuel S. Pickin, could keep the column going with such regularity. But the doctor never flagged; twenty years later the column was still going.

A House for Mr Blawie
V. S. Naipaul

In the United States at about the same time millions of Americans, without the luxury of having a Brahmin boy to read to them, read the syndicated column of Walter Lippmann, which was entitled *Today and Tomorrow*, though it was not as easily have been called "That Body Politic of Yours". Like Ajodha, they read with gravity, concern, alarm. Like Dr Pickin, Lippmann never flagged, finding a new danger to the body politic anything from two to four days a week over the course of some thirty-six years. And like Mr Blawie, one has to wonder why Lippmann's readers subjected themselves to this torment and how he could keep the column going with such regularity.

Among that not always jolly class of mortals known as promising young men, Walter Lippmann was surely one of the most promising of all. Born in 1889, he was a New Yorker by birth, a German Jew by ancestry, a reader through his family's economic position, and an exceedingly, even toweringly, intelligent fellow by nature. He was a only child, with a potentially domineering mother; whose attempts at domination he early eluded, and a kindly but ineffectual father, his relationship with whom Lippmann later in life described as "never very intimate, but affectionately friendly". Dispassionate, detached, oddly disconnected from political and social moorings—most people were unaware that he was a Jew—Lippmann seemed perfectly equipped to be what in later years his readers took him for: a machine child, for dispensing disinterested opinion.

Ronald Steel's *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* is not a heavily psychological biography. With a life so elaborately intertwined with public events as Lippmann's, Steel has his hands full merely laying the carpet, without attempting to find the figure in it. But he does venture the observation that Walter Lippmann may have

found his true father in "a succession of strong leaders, whom he greatly admired, and in a variety of older men to whom he became attached, men of strong character and personal warmth". Be that as it may, at the very least the young Walter Lippmann had the knack of making a strong impression on exceptional men. He was also something of what the job advertisements refer to as a "self-starter".

The elderly William James, for example, came to call on Lippmann when the latter, at Harvard, published a rebellious undergraduate article in the *Harvard Illustrated*. Santayana, who was said to have lectured at Harvard while staring out of the window towards the Europe for which he yearned, apparently looked away from the window long enough to take note of Lippmann, whom he offered a job as a graduate assistant in his introductory philosophy course. Lippmann showed up at a seminar which Graham Wallas taught at Harvard in the spring of 1910, and a few years later Wallas's book, *The Great Society*, was published with a dedication to Walter Lippmann. When Lincoln Steffens, author of *The Shame of Cities* and then the wielder of the muckiest rake in American journalism, gave an occasional lecture at Harvard, Lippmann arranged to find his house on the Steffens's estate as well, and later became his research assistant.

"Of course Walter Lippmann's mind was of a rather special type", Van Wyck Brooks wrote in his autobiography, "but he was mature at twenty-three or so when most of us were still floundering about in a prolonged adolescence". Another way of saying this is to say that Lippmann had the gift of perpetual middle-age: when he was twenty he seemed fifty; and when he was seventy-five, he still seemed fifty. Perhaps the only time Walter Lippmann did not seem fifty was when he was nearly fifty—when he was, to be exact, forty-eight and left his wife for the wife of Hamilton Fish Armstrong, one of his closest friends (though some, I suppose, might argue that no act could be more essentially middle-aged than this).

Not the least advantage of Lippmann's precocity, his rare intellectual equanimity and superior perspective, was that it got him quickly out of the starting-gate and on to the course of a career. The only problem—and it was a happy problem—was which of several careers to choose from, for the young Walter Lippmann's possibilities could scarcely have been greater. For a time he thought he might become an art historian. He is easily imagined as an academic, probably a political philosopher. As a life as a political activist was another prospect; and indeed shortly after leaving Harvard, in a youthful socialist phase, he worked for the then socialist mayor of the city of Schenectady. He was among the founding editors of *The New Republic*, and could doubtless have left his mark as a magazine editor

(it was Lippmann who brought Edmund Wilson to the *New Republic* as literary editor). "He is a born writer", Justice Holmes wrote of Lippmann in a letter to Lewis Einstein; and, judging from early essays Lippmann wrote on H. L. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis, he could have been, had he chosen, a first-class literary critic. But what Walter Lippmann finally became, at the age of forty-two, was a columnist, a man who looks out upon the world and offers his opinion about its condition to the prescribed length and on prescribed days: a Delphic oracle on a deadline.

Lippmann neither set out to be a columnist nor did he become such a creature overnight. Before starting his column, in 1911, he put in a long apprenticeship as a journalist, a generalist, and a publicist. He certainly never made the vulgar error of starting at the bottom. He completed his first book, *A Preface to Politics*, when he was twenty-three. He socialized for a time in bohemia, attending the Greenwich Village salon of General Dodge Luban, though always one imagined with a slight sense of slumming, for Walter Lippmann, whose suits were bespoke and whose hair was professionally shampooed, was very far from being a bohemian. In the presidential election of 1916, when only twenty-seven, he wrote the labour plank in the campaign platform of Theodore Roosevelt, the one American political figure he unashamedly admired. With the First World War he became interested in foreign affairs, and joined the United States delegation to the Paris peace conference, and was personally responsible for fashioning eight of President Wilson's famous though ill-fated Fourteen Points. "He has a mind like a knife and will be a great power one day," Harold Laski wrote to Justice Brandeis.

What Lippmann was becoming was something of an American Harold Laski; the bright young man, the behind-the-scenes wheeler-dealer, the eminence grise; but Lippmann was of a higher intellectual calibre than Harold Laski—more thoughtful, less locked into a single policy, rather more refined in his interests, tastes, and bearing. Bernard Berenson predicted great things for him; Leonard Woolf thought him a brilliant conversationalist. Thus at 1 Tatli and among Bloomsbury he was adjudged OK. As a writer, he showed himself not merely precocious but original, and perhaps nowhere more so than in *Public Opinion* (1922), a book published when he was thirty-three, which still has a high standing among serious social scientists.

The same year that *Public Opinion* appeared, Lippmann left the *New Republic* to become an editorial leader-writer in the United States are called, for the *New York World*, where he would remain for nine years, tapping out

opinions on all possible subjects, though chiefly on foreign affairs. Before long he became editor of the *New York World's* editorial page at an excellent salary and with three months' leave each year to travel and to devote to his own writing. The editorial was a form he was comfortable with. "I find the *World* job easy to do," he wrote to Berenson. There was always something of the model editorial about Lippmann's prose, which tended to be judgmental yet cool, slightly high-blown yet even-handed. If he had a reigning tone of advocacy, even in the act of advocacy. As Steel remarks, "Lippmann cared about social justice, but it was not an emotional issue for him."

Mr Steel would clearly prefer that it had been an emotional issue. He favours, as he puts it, "the voice of Lippmann the romantic, before that voice was muted by caution, eminence, and skepticism". But Walter Lippmann was decorous by temperament (even deploring, as a socialist at Harvard, bad taste in propaganda). Steel does not, in general, understand Lippmann's performance during his years as editor of the *New York World's* editorial page. He disapproves of his not favouring Senator Robert La Follette in the presidential election of 1924, of his disliking over the famous Sacco-Vanzetti case, and of his coming increasingly to distrust the wisdom of the masses. (Steel views Lippmann as "one of the fashionable words of contemporary political discourse" and a "fascist".) Of Lippmann turning first one way, then another, on the Sacco-Vanzetti case, Steel maintains that, whatever his true views, he also "cared about his influence as a public person", and that "his fear of being cut off from centers of power (and his distaste for too close an association with radicals) often muted his voice". That Sacco and Vanzetti may have been guilty, that certain radical pronouncements may have been distasteful, these possibilities are not entertained.

Walter Lippmann and the American Century is a mild, famous man. Certainly he was everywhere known among journalists and intellectuals; and his fame was beginning to spread beyond the world of his professional peers. In *A Preface to Politics*, a book he published in 1923, a "best-seller". He was offered a chair in government at Harvard; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offered him its presidency. Magazines put out feelers to him. Adolph Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*, offered him the job of running his paper's Washington bureau. William Randolph Hearst wanted him to write a column for his papers. But the offer Lippmann finally accepted was from the *New York Herald-Tribune*: it was to write a column of opinion four days a week, at a salary of \$25,000 a year, with more money to come from syndication—this was at the height of the Depression—long vacations, every expense paid and perquisite seen to

a vaguely racist country, ruled by Big Business, out to squash radicals, hold back the working class, and by and large make life hell for all who choose to go against the monstrous wishes of America's secret rulers. Although Steel never states his position directly, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* is a whole-earth catalogue of revisionist presuppositions, assumptions, notions. Much of his biography is scarcely more than a checklist of Walter Lippmann's opinions. What they are checked against is Ronald Steel's opinions, and when Lippmann's opinions and Steel's are not congruent, Lippmann's are found wanting.

Although Steel's political purposes mar his book's standing as a work of biographical art, he does present much interesting detail about the quotidian aspects of Lippmann's life. Lippmann was a beautifully organized, intellectual worker. While editorial-page editor of the *New York World*, he also did a monthly article for the magazine *Vanity Fair*, lectured widely, and published a book roughly every two years. This still left him adequate time for political sport, national and international. In the presidential election campaign of 1928, he was part of the inner strategy group of Al Smith, the Democratic candidate. But in 1927, Lippmann and John D. Edgar Morrow, then United States Ambassador to Mexico, in a secret diplomatic mission which had entailed working through to a compromise between American oil companies and a Mexican government committed to regaining control of Mexican oil and mineral rights. Nor was he above using his editorials to flatter senators—Senator William E. Borah was a notable example—in order to gain their legislative support for programmes which he, Lippmann, favoured. In what was to become a fairly common practice, Lippmann took an active hand in events, and then, through his writing, applauded the good sense of something he himself had helped to bring about.

By the time the *New York World* folded, in 1931, Walter Lippmann was, at forty-two, a mild, famous man. Certainly he was everywhere known among journalists and intellectuals; and his fame was beginning to spread beyond the world of his professional peers. In *A Preface to Politics*, a book he published in 1923, a "best-seller". He was offered a chair in government at Harvard; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offered him its presidency. Magazines put out feelers to him. Adolph Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*, offered him the job of running his paper's Washington bureau. William Randolph Hearst wanted him to write a column for his papers. But the offer Lippmann finally accepted was from the *New York Herald-Tribune*: it was to write a column of opinion four days a week, at a salary of \$25,000 a year, with more money to come from syndication—this was at the height of the Depression—long vacations, every expense paid and perquisite seen to

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commentary

How to cross a field

By D. M. Thomas

The Suicide
Aldwych Theatre

When someone shoots himself in serious nineteenth-century drama, in Chekhov or Ibsen say, there is an element of farce. We agree with Judge Brack: people don't do that sort of thing. In contrast, the contemplated suicide of Semyon, an unemployed Soviet worker, in Nikolai Erdman's farce *The Suicide* (now transferred from the RSC's Warehouse Theatre to the Aldwych) is profoundly serious. Beneath our laughter at his Hamlet-like indecisions and delays, sympathy and pain grip the heart. It is the late 1920s. The paradise hymned by Chekhov's ineffectual characters has come to pass and feels more like hell. People do do that sort of thing now; indeed, it seems a wholly logical act.

Erdman's fellow-dramatist at the Meyerhold Theatre, Mayakovsky, blew out his brains around the time when *The Suicide* was completed. The logic of suicide would become increasingly unanswerable as Stalin's grip tightened; though it also became increasingly superfluous: the State would do the job for you—for Meyerhold, among millions. Nadezhda Mandelstam, who described *The Suicide* as the best play in the Soviet repertoire, observed that the hero's ultimate decision to live gained added resonance over the years; she came to see him as the spokesman for those, like herself and her husband, who declined to take the logical way out. Absurdly, they chose to cling to existence for as long as they could.

Absurdity was the only sanity. Erdman uses farce as a way of coping with, and exposing, the madness of a society in which "only the dead say what the living think". When Egor ("I'm a postman, and what I want to read about is postmen") signs a letter "25,000 postmen", and explains it is his pseudonym, it's funny; but the engineered "mass protests" of outraged workers have been anything but funny for innumerable persecuted dissidents. It is more astonishing that the play was ever in rehearsal than that it was banned.

Acting out

By Richard Combs

Gloria
Columbia Cinema, Shaftesbury
Avenue

Seldom has New York been filmed with the kind of wit and energy, the sense of surprise—that John Cassavetes displays in this location-made gangster melodrama-cum-classic saga of an ex-showgirl, who is also an underworld outcast and hard-bitten gunperson, trying to shelter a six-year-old boy from the vengeance of the Mob. Part of the surprise is that Cassavetes should be making this kind of film at all. Performers rather than plots have always been the first priority of his movies, and he has shunned genre as a unique, if occasionally woolly, combination of improvisation, home "authenticity".

Gloria, however, twists and turns through all expectations with more skill than most movie car chases. It begins with a tense sequence which makes particularly foreboding use of its New York scenography. We travel by night across the Manhattan skyline to the South Bronx, where a Puerto Rican family waits anxiously for a visit from the Mob—the father is a Mafia accountant who has been skimming off the top and talking to the FBI. Just before the family's visitation, a teenage neighbour, Gloria (a wonderfully showy, sour impersonation by Gená Rowlands), comes calling, and is immediately

before the opening and never performed or published in the Soviet Union. The RSC deserves great credit for having resurrected this hilarious, sad, life-affirming drama in Peter Tegel's lively translation.

Like all really good drama, *The Suicide* has the power to move and disturb us timelessly, as well as in its historical setting. But the first response is reliant upon the second; and unfortunately, during the first few scenes of Ron Daniels's production, the Russian context is not firmly established. Roger Rees as Semyon, Susan Tracy as his wife, and Lila Kaye as his mother-in-law, have the air of middle-class English actors playing an unemployed English worker and his family of the 1980s. Their Russian names seem merely odd. Not until the entry of various members of the petty bourgeoisie, all of whom want Semyon to commit suicide as a protest on their behalf, does the play begin to seem Russian and the windowless wall to take on overtones of the Lubyanka Prison. Semyon's wife and mother-in-law never quite manage to look Russian; but Roger Rees's performance grows from competence to excellence.

The disaffected intellectuals and profiteers are played energetically; with a little help, they even manage to sound too professionally Slavonic in the funeral anthem for the supposed deceased. But Mother Russia, in the persons of the black-clothed and superstitious mother-in-law, and briefly a pair of extraordinarily nimble and youthful babushkas in a cemetery, elude this performance. Erdman might have enjoyed that irony: Mother Russia eluded the revolution too.

The author himself, like Semyon, seems to have kept his head down and for another forty years, after the death of his second and last play. He survived a spell in Siberia and lived obscurely. But *lived*, like Semyon: and managed it, by turning into the Deaf Mute who, as the point "listens" to Semyon's philosophical questioning. In 1949 Pasternak read *Doctor Zhivago* to a circle of friends, including Erdman. Erdman listened, and went away without saying a word. Life is not so simple as to cross a field.

Peter Tegel's translation of *The Suicide* is published by Pluto Books (52pp, £2.50, 0 86104 203 4).

given possession of the youngest child and the disputed account book.

There is an authentic-feeling edginess and black humour to all this that makes one think Cassavetes may have missed his métier as an action director. But the audience has been set up as completely as the characters. The plot that has been unrolled in these first fifteen minutes is virtually all that Gloria contains. Once the heroine and her charge take flight into the streets, with the hoods in disorganized but constant pursuit, attention shifts to what happens between them. This turns out to be a hilarious mélange of role-swapping, in which the cynical moll has no sooner accepted that she must mother the bewildered child than he begins peeing out his own gangster fantasy.

What Cassavetes has done is to open up the genre while pretending that he is obeying its rules. What he opens it up to is a good deal of incidental life and amusement: Gloria having a much harder time hailing cabs than making her purchases; the two replying to a grave-digger's canny remark that he can say a proper farewell to his family; Gloria also has a way of dealing with all the bad things that are happening to them (pre-emptively until a final confrontation in which even the gangsters are apparently pretending not to be his conclusion, but an appropriate one in a film that has crossed the boundaries of Hollywood action movies with Cassavetes's "you are, who you say you are, or what you can act out."

Ex-convict extravaganza

By Humphrey Carpenter

The Ticket-of-Leave Man
Cottesloe Theatre

Tom Taylor (1817-1880) had an enviable career: Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Professor of English at University College, London; practising barrister; editor of *Punch* from 1874; and an immensely successful playwright. In thirty-five years, more than seventy of his pieces were performed on the London stage. On the other hand, many of them were pot-boilers, and only a couple of decades after his death the DNB judged that "he lacked dramatic genius or commanding power of expression".

True, apparently, on the evidence of what was generally regarded as his best play, now revived in an energetic production by Piers Haggard at the National Theatre. There is, quite rightly, a lot to distract one from the play's shoddiness. The auditorium is rigged out to look like an East End music hall, and a trio of strings and piano not only produces entr'actes, but underlines the more pungent lines of dialogue with tremolandi and sforzandi worthy of the best cinema pit-orchestra in silent days. Robin Don's set looks like a quieter version of Sean Kenny's *Oliver!* staging, and the Dickens reminder is apt, if uncomfortable. Tom Taylor adapted *A Tale of Two Cities* for the stage, with the author's approval, and one can hardly doubt that in his own play he was trying to strike the authentic Dickensian note. Low life is there in all varieties—criminals, navvies, im-

pecunious clerks led into bad habits, tiffs at beer-gardens, perverseness of all kinds—and he has something of Dickens's ear for language. But Taylor is not made of Dickens's stuff.

At his best, he reaches the heights of Mr Pooter, or a *Punch* cartoon. There are delicious glimpses of high-life "in a South Western Suburb", with seven-and-sixpenny bottles of sherry flying about on salvers at the open-air tables, while nigger minstrels perform offstage. But at the centre of all this there is a wooden tale of an innocent Lancashire lad taken for a ride by doped criminals, serving time for passing forged notes, and then trying to come to terms with the fact that though he has his ticket-of-leave—his discharge from prison, with full remission for good behaviour—no one wants to know him. Taylor cannot do anything with his plight, and Paul Copley as the lad himself and Rebecca Saire as his fiancée seems understandably unsure whether to resort to spoof or play it straight. The audience, by the second half, has no doubt, and takes to cheering, hissing, and booing in all the right places, after which everything is simply good fun. Meanwhile, Michael Elphick's Detective Hawkshaw is always ready to emerge from behind a navy's pint pot, or a tombstoner's swirling with dry ice, to clap the handcuffs on the villains before anything nasty should really happen.

Much credit is due to the violonist, who has to work much the hardest of anyone present. But surely Tom Taylor's contemporaries saw more in the play than this? Have our sensibilities been dulled by too many Old Tyme Music Halls?

Getting even

By Virginia Llewellyn
SmithNine to Five
Odeon, Leicester Square

Ever dreamt of stringing up your boss? *Nine to Five* is a fantasy for all those women who see themselves as what the theme-song calls a step on the bossman's ladder. Jane Fonda plays Judy, a divorcee starting work for a huge corporation among a group of cruelly regimented women. Lily Tomlin (memorable in *Nashville* as the caring mother patiently teaching her deaf and dumb children) is Violet, a widow turned competent career girl; she has trained one young man after another only to see them promoted above her while she remains section supervisor. Dolly Parton makes her screen debut as Doralee, the Texan belle with a heart of gold who, on the league, turns out not to be bedding the boss. He—Franklin Hart Jr. (Dabney Coleman)—is the object of their communal scorn. Doralee fends him off with true Southern courtesy as he clutches at her and flashes at her, computer-like, all-purpose and unanswerable messages ("You mean so much more to me than just a dumb secretary"). Meanwhile Hart rises upwards on Violet's bright ideas while making her fix his coffee and do his shopping. "Teamwork," he calls it.

The petty needling of the bossman's toady, the consolation of lunch-time dash to the store for nothing we have not met before in the oppressed life of the female office-worker: as now revealed to newcomer Judy. But Jane Fonda, in this incarnation knows that mundane things like needing one's pay-checker get in the way of Judy, Violet and Doralee have no constructive plan to improve it: their dreams of revenge are only fantasies, liberated by a blinge of running on a little too long, the

only patch of tedium in the film). Impotent depression is what unites them, and it is a pure accident that throws them into a situation where they are obliged to fight, in self-defence.

What began as a comedy of manners develops into a fast-moving spoof thriller. Outside the office routine, we observe, competence temporarily deserts Judy, Violet and Doralee, who panic, get hysterical, smash up the car and in general exhibit a variety of traditionally female shortcomings. Fato seems out to get them, and it is nothing as efficient as teamwork that gets them to home base; rather, it is the solidarity of being all such nice girls together.

The virtues of middle-of-the-road American womanhood fairly shine out of Fonda, Tomlin and Parton: when the enemy at last falls into their hands, Doralee is easily persuaded by the other two out of her staid solution ("Ah says, we hire a couple wranglers, to up stairs and beat the shit outa him"). There is a tough act to follow: from the traffic cop who makes them pull in, to Judy's ex-husband attempting a comeback, in every eyeball-to-eyeball encounter the man ends up looking foolish, and in the final send-up of virility Franklin Hart Jr. himself is left dangling in fancy dress from his own bedroom ceiling, like a castrated Superman.

It is a fairy tale, and my one regret is that from it, and with Colin Higgins (who scripted *Harold and Maude*) directing, we could reasonably have expected shouli moments that nearly but do not quite happen. Nowhere is the atmosphere more fabulous than in the happy ending, when the ogre's grisly domain has been transformed into a super-productive paradise by flextime and an office cliche: when every desk wears a pot plant and the office lush a brand new perm, thanks to the Alcoholics Rehabilitation Program. *Nine to Five* tells us nothing we did not know before, but it proves that even with her face sticking out of an aura of wash-'n'-wear frills Jane Fonda can still conjure up illusions of freedom, and that she was right not to treat the subject seriously. It is slick, fast and very funny. Go and see it in your lunch hour—you might not have time to buy the rat-poison.

T.L.S.

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The pithead and the props department

By Blake Morrison

Sons and Lovers BBC TV

The classic serial is traditionally déclassé. Its favourite source material may be the nineteenth-century realist novel, but it likes to soften the hard edges of social difference in which such fiction deals. Nostalgia takes their place: there is a strong emphasis on period flavour, which usually turns out to have less to do with history than with weather (blue skies over cornfields and London smogs). And diminution invariably ensues, the camera—with its winks and nods and underlinings—eradicating the ambiguities of the original text.

Trevor Griffiths is on record as having some animus against these conventions, and part of the interest in watching his adaptation of *Sons and Lovers* for television (in a series of seven episodes now drawing to a close) has been to see how far he has resisted them. In the event he has gone a good deal less far than his professed ambition to make Lawrence relevant "in a year when unemployment will reach three million" might have led us to suppose. And the subtitle of the series—"A Version for Television"—has not been the licence for weaker better revampings, but is simply a modest disclaimer, a way of acknowledging that however closely Griffiths may stay to the text (and for the most part it has been very close indeed), omissions of various kinds are inevitable. The tension between Griffiths's social purposes and the restraints of classic serial convention has resulted in one of the best adaptations of recent years.

Part of the reason for the success lies, of course, in the nature of

Sons and Lovers itself. Many of Lawrence's fictions, with their penchant for the "unknown" and "beyond", those dark forces and that to-ing and fro-ing of the psyche, do not "adapt" at all well. There was a reminder of this, halfway through the series, with the South Bank Show premiere of *The Trespasser*, all moonlight and flowing white dresses and terrible dialogue: too often Lawrence tempts film directors to re-live their youthful fantasies with Alan Bates in the leading role. But *Sons and Lovers* is different: as Lawrence himself acknowledged to Edward Garnett, it is a novel interested in "accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotions" ("that hard violent style full of sensation and presentation", as he called it in the same letter), and this physically stands a chance of visual translation.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Griffiths fares best with the work scenes: Morel down the pit, Paul at Jordan's Surgical Appliance factory, Clara and her mother making lace in their parlour, the Levers brothers at the farm. There is an authentic materiality, too, about the pub, the chapel, the backstreets of the Bottom, and so on. When Paul and Clara walk to the spot where they make love for the first time, it is all there, eerily identical to the Lawrence passage: Wilford bridge, the steep bank of red earth sloping down to the Trent, the slipping-and-sliding, the two fishermen, and the crushed red carnations.

In other areas, however, the over-enthusiasm of the BBC props department takes its toll. The seeing off of William to London is an excuse to uncouple an immaculately gleaming old steam train. The portentous naming-of-Paul episode takes place with the whites and the vicar, Paul's early attempt to knock the haughtiness out of Clara is overshadowed by some Akenfield-

like leaping-over-haystacks to the accompaniment of folksy Morris tunes.

Hardest hit of all is the interior of the Morel home, which has undergone a full-scale *embourgeoisement*: a riot of clocks, pictures, bookcases, brass candlesticks, top notch crockery and lush floral wallpaper. It is not a home that the black-faced Walter Morel looks comfortable in, especially when he is taking a tin bath. Not surprisingly there is no place in this version for that marvellous early scene from the novel in which Morel takes his breakfast early, toasting his bacon with a clasp-knife and using a newspaper as a table mat: it would not have looked right in this house.

As for the characters looking right, that, too, has its hits and misses. Tom Bell has been widely praised for his performance as Walter, and though there are a shade too many Steptoe-like in his grimacing and drunkenness, he is about as near as he could be to Morel's warm "sensual flame of life" without actually bursting outright. Eileen Atkins as Gertrude Morel is perfect, too—the right blend of meaty-mouthed crabbiness, keep-your-heads-off possessiveness, and that's-my-boy pride in Paul's artistic achievements. In the wars of the Morels, Griffiths rightly resists the temptation to channel our sympathy towards one or the other, for though Lawrence in later life came to feel that he had been unfair to his father, the novel is more balanced

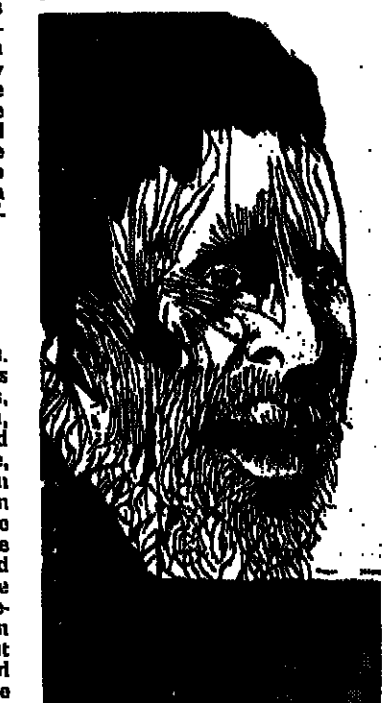
than he knew, and Griffiths gets this right.

Once he begins sporting a moustache midway through the series, Karl Johnson bears an uncanny resemblance to photos of the young Lawrence. But he is rather too old for Paul, a point particularly noticeable whenever he takes off on one of his lolling runs (unfortunate echoes here of the adults-in-short-trousers frolicking in Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*—and why should Paul be forced to sprint everywhere?). It is an impressive performance nonetheless, gawky but ordinary, and destined to stick in the memory if only for Johnson's exasperated pronunciation of the word "mother"—"meth-her". It sounds like, and is clearly the result of long practice (the accents generally seem to have been worked on very hard).

With so many of the other characters plausibly brought to life—not least the thick-lipped Clara and threatening Baxter Dawes—it is only with Leonie Mellinger's Miriam that things begin to go wrong. That angled rictus hat she wears, perhaps intended to denote her romantic attachment to Mary Queen of Scots but looking as if it had come off the terraces of Ibrox or Hampden Park, is wrong from the start. And Ms Mellinger is simply too coquettish and conventionally pretty to do justice to the girl of "large features" and "almost hysterical gestures" that Lawrence created. Despite lingering stares, there's little of the religious brooding intensity (that "wheeling the soul out of things") that's central to Miriam's character.

The failure is surprising given Griffiths's studious drawing-out of feminist elements in the novel: not just Clara's lecturing at a "Women's Social and Political Meeting" ("Women of the World Unite" banners in the background), but Mrs Morel's interest in the Co-Operative Women's Guild and Miriam's complaining that "men have everything". It is a good example of Griffiths's determination to emphasize political rather than psychological elements of the novel. The Oedipal theme has not been ignored (the shot of Mrs Morel running her fingers through Paul's hair is frank enough, and ten years ago might have been enough to cause a minor rumpus), but it's made rather less of here than in the bulk of Lawrence criticism.

Lawrence's *Complete Poems*, collected and edited with an introduction and notes by Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, first published in 1964, is being brought out in a 1,000 page single-volume paperback by Penguin on February 26, at £5 (0 14 042 220 X). Among other Penguin publications this month is a new edition (by David Hey) of Richard Gough's *The History of Myddel*, an intriguing and unusual work of seventeenth-century rural local history (334pp, £2.50, 0 14 005841 9).



"Othello", a 1973 woodcut by the American artist and illustrator Leonard Baskin, from the current exhibition of his work at the Cottage Gallery, 9 Hereford Road, Bayswater, London W2.

Verfremdungseffekt

By Norman Stone

The Journal of Bridget Hitler BBC TV

The onlie begueter of Philip Saville's production seems to have been Hans Jürgen Syberberg's film *Hitler*, the first part of which is a collage of Hitler speeches, various side-effects and a great deal of ranting, accompanied from time to time by the opening bars of the *Parasol Prelude*. The *Journal of Bridget Hitler*, being British, is less readily incomprehensible than the German effort. Written by Beryl Bainbridge (and related to her novel, *Young Adolf*), it hangs together round a supposed visit of Hitler to his elder half-brother, in 1912, in Liverpool. The half-brother's existence (like that of his British wife and a son who later plagued Hitler in Germany and subsequently has lived in America) is true.

There is a great deal of symbolism. Some of it is obvious enough—Hitler in the Art Gallery, musing on his failure to become an artist, and then quoting bits from *Mein Kampf*, while film of his triumphant days is shown—accompanied, for some reason, by bits of Mahler. The point, presumably, is that failed men are often very bitter. (In all this, the parts that are interesting consist of old film footage and excerpts from *Tristan and Siegfried*.)

But I am not at all sure what the rest of the symbolism amounts to. There are films shot in black-and-white, with characters wearing Edwardian clothing, including family scenes in the foreground of which suddenly appear figures (in colour) wearing either SA uniform or modern clothing. A little later, and even more mysteriously, the entire dramatic personnel (the actors and Beryl Bainbridge) appear in a canteen, making polite conversation and then getting involved in a row, of wholly mysterious origins, with

some skinheads, who throw tin cans. Perhaps this is some elaborate point about football hooligans. After that it all drags on and on, and there are scenes of Hitler and Women—not least, his half-niece, Geli Raubal, who killed herself in September, 1931. I think, but am not really at all sure, that the whole thing has something to do with the relationship between power and sex; more remotely, it might have something to do with the link between will to power and alienation from one's roots. But it could just be that I am imposing some kind of sterile male ordering-principle on what is meant to be a vastly fecund, earth-motherly, stream-of-consciousness sort of chaos, a tableau which could only be completed by my marching onto the set wearing a Pickelhaube and carrying a battered portable typewriter.

Goes out, followed by a furry animal

By Stanley Wells

The Winter's Tale BBC TV

A permanent set of angled, wedge-shaped blocks, like great jumps of cheese, defines the playing area. For the first half, the blocks are granite-grey, the floor is patterned in black and white. It's a chilly, winter in Sicily. For Bohemia, the wedges turn double-Gloucester yellow, the floor green; stooks of corn and potted plants replace skeletal trees. Nature is art; symbolism is enhanced; but the set's limitations in Jane Howell's production—the latest in the BBC Shakespeare series—deny the romantic liberties of the tale.

The small screen all too easily concentrates attention, reducing perspective, diminishing stature. Frequent head-and-shoulder shots—addressing us

directly through the perspex, fine for Rikki Fulton's irishly plausible Autolycus, at other points make too explicit a distinction between private and public utterance. Rhetoric is inhibited. Anna Calder-Marshall is a sympathetic Hermione, but too confident in her trial. Why should only we learn that the Emperor of Russia is her father? She should be pleading to the whole court, not just to Leontes and to us. Jeremy Kemp's Leontes, ironvoiced, properly humourless, seems understated. His anguished utterances, never dull, but mannered, visually and vocally, with no respect for the pentameter line.

Individual performances are well characterized—a powerful, deeply felt Paulina from Margaret Tyack, Cyril Luckham endearing as her ill-fated husband, Arthur Hewlett an earnest and sincere Old Shepherd, Debbie Farrington as Perdita is pretty, innocent but amused, a

country lass to be reckoned with. George Howe brings style to Paulina's steward, and television can give us a real baby as the infant Perdita.

Jane Howell's direction is sensible and fluent. Some pitfalls are avoided. If Robin Kermode's pleasant Florizel does not time stand still with his praises of Perdita in the pastoral scene, at least the jollity seems reasonably unforced. The set-piece dances are cut, with some justification. But the play seems smaller, flatter than in the theatre. There is less sense of interaction among the characters, and so less comedy, less drama. The bear looms and Antigonus cowers, but our withers are unwarmed. Though the status scene is moving, the focus on individuals denies us the sense of simultaneous involvement, the thrill of ritual participation as the stone is made flesh. The approach is intelligent and honest, the acting accomplished, but the medium has reduced the message.

Oxford University Press

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The soprano on show

By Patrick O'Connor

W. PORTER WARE AND THADDEUS C. LOCKARD Jr.

P. T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind The American Tour of the Swedish Nightingale

204pp. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. \$20. 0 8071 0687 9

The American years of Jenny Lind were first recounted by C. G. Rosenberg in a little book called *Jenny Lind in America*, published in 1851, as well as by P. T. Barnum himself in his memoirs, *Struggles and Triumphs*. Until the appearance of this new book, these were the prime sources of information about events which were to set a pattern for a whole genre of star-making in their previous collaboration in this field. *The Lost Letters of Jenny Lind* (Collins, 1966), the authors wrote: "The tour is something that merits much fuller treatment... there are many fascinating details waiting to be discovered." Evidently the last fifteen years have been fruitful for them which is as much a tribute to Lind and Barnum as to the air of excitement with which the Americans always received even the most outlandish examples of nineteenth-century European artistic endeavour.

It is pleasantly ironic that Lind, a lady of classic Victorian morality who longed to dissociate herself from what she thought of as the "sinful" stage, should have achieved her ambition through partnership with "the greatest showman on Earth". Although dedicated to publicity and profit-making, Barnum was a complete Victorian himself; what has come to be thought of as old-world courtesy, scrupulous honesty and testimonial combined to make him the ideal impresario for Jenny Lind. Despite her pious, retiring nature she was as eager as the most voracious prima donna to earn as much as possible in the service of her charities, especially the academy for girls that she had founded in Stockholm. Barnum's circus antics in publishing the tour may have perturbed her from time to time, but she never complained. She was aware that it was these very practices which made sure that every American, in a country in which she had been absent for six months before, should be aware of her passage through their midst.

A wag of the day summed up the situation neatly when he rhymed: So Jenny, come along! you're just the card for me, And quit these kings and queens, for the country of the free;

We'll welcome you with speeches, and serenades, and rockets, And you will touch their hearts, and I will tap their pockets; And if between us the public isn't skinned, Why my name isn't Barnum, nor your name Jenny Lind!

This is exactly what did happen, on her arrival in New York on September 1850. A crowd of twenty thousand stood before her hotel until nine in the evening, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. At midnight two hundred local musicians serenaded her from the street accompanied by twenty companies of New York firemen bearing torches. This was not an isolated instance, the tour seemed to inspire romantic gestures. For instance, on September 26 Jenny and her entourage boarded the Empire State steamer to travel from New York to Boston. In the early hours of the morning, while the boat was passing Fort Adams, the officers there played a serenade as a compliment to the singer—because of the late hour few of the passengers were aware of what was taking place and Jenny herself was asleep. It seems symbolic of the whole tour; even with the enormous publicity and enthusiasm, Lind can have had little idea of the great impression these concerts were to make.

All was not entirely sweetness and light—the good manners and old-fashioned charm were complemented by hissing crowds in Havana, dissatisfied audiences in inadequate auditoriums and angry crowds who had either failed to obtain tickets at all or who had been windmilled by ticket touts. More than once the soprano had to make an undignified exit through the back window of a building to avoid a wrathful public.

This tour remained for Lind the most momentous of her career, for during it she was reunited with Otto Goldschmidt, a young musician whose acquaintance she had made in Germany the previous year. He joined the troupe halfway through the tour; six months later he and Jenny were married in Boston on February 5, 1852. A reporter of the *New York Home Journal* wrote punningly: "With what has been seen of the world and the life of husbands, Jenny Lind has probably come round to whence she started—choosing by the instinct of her heart. Her Otto-biography will show how wisely."

At this stage of her voyage, the supporting soloists remained constant, under the watchful eye of Julius Benedict who conducted all the concerts. Throughout the tour, she was accompanied by the two flautists who played double obblato in the aria from Meyerbeer's *A Camp in Silesia*, so popular was

this scene from a cantata totally forgotten even amidst today's bel canto revival. Despite the inclusion of this and other operatic items, and the Handel and Mendelssohn oratorio which Lind loved to sing, the real show-stoppers were the "Bird Song", the "Kerdmann's Song", the inevitable "Home, Sweet, Home" and the "Swedish Echo Song" which one critic blithely referred to as being of the "Tyrolean stamp".

By modern standards her recitals were extraordinarily short—six items per concert sung by Lind herself, the selection varying from town to town but with one of the favourites always on the programme. I would have liked a catalogue of her entire repertoire on this tour as one of the appendices (which includes a further selection of "lost letters")—it would be interesting to see how far-ranging the musical tastes of America allowed her to be. At the end of her stay, when she was no longer under Barnum's management but arranging things in the quieter way that befitted a newly-wedded matron, a correspondent begged her to include more educational material, not taking into account the necessity of also entertaining them.

Late in her life (she died in 1887) Jenny Lind is supposed to have made an isolated comment on one of the earliest phonograph machines. Of course this has not survived—even if it had, the primitive recording would be inadequate to give us a hint of what the voice was like. It is therefore to contemporary accounts, several of which are reprinted in this volume, to which one must turn to establish what exactly it was about her voice which so captivated a whole generation, both in Europe and America. In an era which had heard Mailbrun, Grisi and Sontag, just three of the more celebrated prima donnas who sang the same repertoire.

The reviewer of the *Daily American* in Nashville, where Jenny sang on March 31, 1851, gives one of the most vivid descriptions:

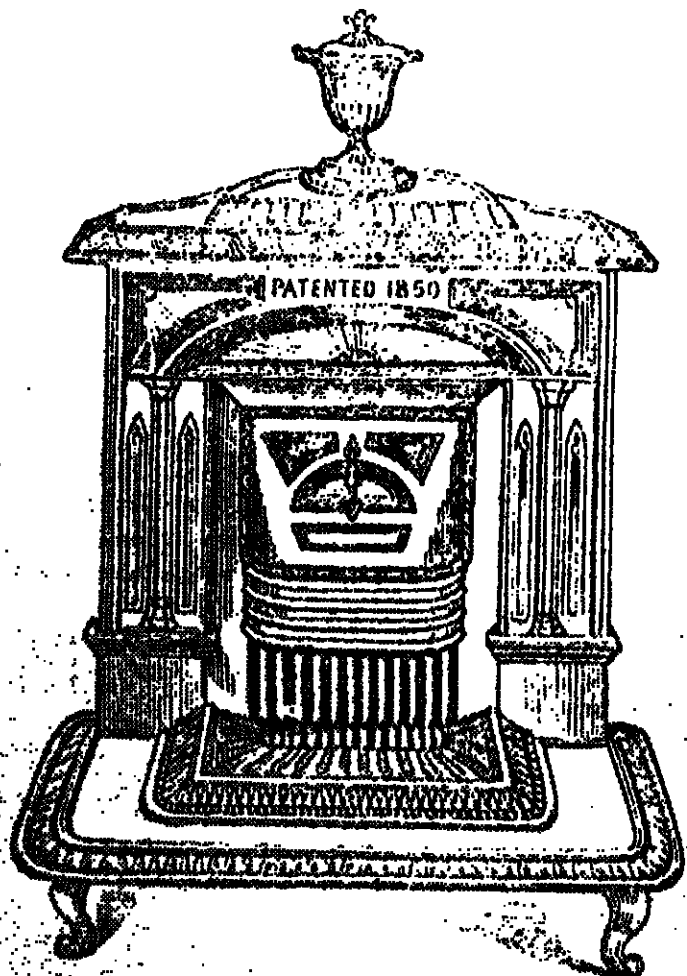
The extreme burst of her voice in the upper portion of its register is far beyond the ordinary range of sopranos and she has acquired the power of moulding the higher notes entirely at her will. By this she is enabled to produce some of the most astonishing effects upon the listener. When, after a musical play through the lower and more ordinary compass of the voice she bursts forth in tones clearer and higher than we have ever before heard from any singer, her power completely astounds the audience. Another of the more special beauties which particularly

mark the voice of Miss Lind is the unexampled quality and delicacy of its piano... as for her trills nothing could be more correct—more rapid—or more thoroughly musical. The transition from the high to the low notes is rapidly effected and seems as though it cost her no effort.

The favour, passionate intensity and even abandon of her singing are described in this and other reviews quoted. These are qualities not usually associated with a singer best remembered usually for her perfect and even vocalism.

Lind's American tour may seem like a fly-speck on the panorama of musical history, but the authors have such single-minded interest

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A "Jenny Lind" stove as advertised in the *Portsmouth (New Haven) Journal* of October 19, 1850, from the book reviewed here.

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Harmony and humanity

By Wilfrid Mellers

MARY CHAN

Music in the Theatre of Ben Jonson 397pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £25. 0 812632 8

Music and Tempest, those archetypal symbols which pervade the poetic dramas of Shakespeare, weave a web that deeply affects us because the interactions of the two come to us through the feelings, thoughts and actions of particular human creatures. But although Shakespeare's genius, in the context of the plays, alchemizes metaphysical abstractions into flesh and blood, generalized symbols nonetheless helped to shape the world Shakespeare was born into, the more of Music and Tempest, synonymous with Order and Chaos, moulded a Renaissance social philosophy which Renaissance masque formulated in theatrical projection, creating a ritual of humanism.

It is thus no accident that Ben Jonson, the most intellectually "conscious" philosophically cogent and morally conservative of the great Elizabethans and Jacobean, should have devoted himself with more or less equal energy to drama and to the masque. As a playwright he favoured satiric veins: negatively in that he pricked bubbles of social pretence and presumption, positively in that he did so by reference to concepts of order and of value. As a masqueur he was, as well as idea he "bodied forth" in his masques, which represent not what we are but what we might, indeed ought to be.

The snag lies in the fact that as rituals of humanism masques remain metaphors. Individual human beings are not put to the test, refined in the fire, as they are in Shakespeare's plays. In so far as Jonson the dramatist deals with "real" people they are usually either villainous or inane, and are therefore either destructive or incapable of the fulfilled human harmony that his masque-philosophy envisages. This is why Jonson's achievement, though powerfully impressive, is historically limited. We learn from

Jonson's plays much of human crassness, malignancy and folly that is directly relevant to us today; but by his vision of Good we are not changed, even in the twinkling of an eye, as we are by Shakespeare's redemptive insights.

Mary Chan's book is important because it is the first attempt comprehensively to analyse the relationship between Jonson's plays and his masques. She sets the stage with a chapter on music in the pre-Jonsonian era of the Elizabethan theatre, commenting on the ways in which laments, battle-pieces, pastoral dialogues, catches, dances and polyphonic consorts were employed mostly as conventionalized verbalised, though occasionally with symbolic intent. All this material is familiar, but is here neatly presented; as are the brief accounts of the leading composers—the two Faraboscos, Robert Johnson and Nicholas Lanier—who were to be Jonson's main associates.

Jonson inherited these musical traditions, but was not a man to employ them adventitiously. True, his first two Humour plays offer no scope for music; but when, in *Cynthia's Revels* (presented in 1600), he first used it extensively with clearly defined, if not totally convincing, purpose. The play is a hybrid between realistic drama and the allegorical mythology of masque, since it celebrates the "real" queen Elizabeth in the guise of an "ideal" goddess Cynthia, and sees ideally as time Cynthia against the backdrop of the time-serving courtiers. The music cuts both ways, at one moment embracing the temporality of a frivolously moribund human society in empty euphoric dance measures, at the next moment incarnating the eternal order of a spiritual vision, unrealized but not necessarily unrealizable. The play is about "the moral significance of bad poetry" as Dr Chan puts it, and ends with the hope that if the Cynthia court could emulate the example of the Queen herself, good poetry and the good life might be restored. Dr Chan makes a case for the piece's merits without persuading us, or herself, that the dénouement is anything more than a wish-fulfilment. No wonder Jonson's masques are judged from the fact that he relinquished the hybrid con-

vention and, having found himself, said what he had to say either in the form of comedies that appear to use music ironically, or in masques in which the music in conjunction with the dance acts out the moral order that is supposed to justify the poetry. In masques negative emotions of ironic implication are banished to the periphery of the antimasque, and are dismissed in being trivialized; indeed antimasque music was so perfunctory that it was often improvised and seldom written down.

Not surprisingly, Jonson's use of music in his plays becomes subtler the more his imagination is engaged, and is richest in his masterpiece, *Volpone*. One cannot merely say that the Fox, singing of love and/or lust to Celia, is proffering values false because temporal, though sexual love may "die" in the act, the however amoral humanity which the marvellous poetry purveys cannot be thus readily disposed of; especially when it is reinforced by Ferrobosco's eloquent, even noble, music. Dr Chan's discussion of *Volpone* embroils literary and musical criticism of considerable perspicacity, helping us to understand how the play's resonant human relevance depends on its moral ambiguities. In her discussion of *The Devil is an Ass* she is interestingly illiberal, but more confusing in her handling of the moral issue. Perhaps Jonson himself was; but though Witlipoff's exultant song "O! so soft! O, so white! O, so sweet is she!" carries ironic implications in that, while it is being performed, the dainty troll enters unseen by Witlipoff, one cannot maintain that the gustatory imagery presents the girl merely as a choice morsel to be gobbled up. The tenderness of the verbal rhythm, enhanced by the rarefied loveliness of the dainty musical setting (assuming it was written for the theatrical performance), reveals spiritual illumination within corporeal delight. Jonson's perfection did not entirely eschew temporal reality. Even though he did not fully understand the question as Shakespeare did, he wouldn't have been the great poet he is if he had claimed that no such equation existed. That Dr Chan is aware of it too is manifest in her admirable chapter on Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. She doesn't say that she includes

these plays, which might seem extraneous to her main theme, because they demonstrate what Jonson leaves out, or fails to grapple with. None the less, such is the effect of the chapter, in the context of the book, with Shakespeare, the masque's resurrections occur perennially, now as then, within individual human beings, including you and me; whereas Jonson's vision of a world reborn remains within the context of history.

Dr Chan's account of the Jonsonian masques themselves is introduced by a chapter on the philosophy of masque distilled from Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. This material is well-written and perhaps less deeply revealing than Sidney's *Arcadia*; so the chapter is dubious justifiably if one regards the book as a contribution to musicology and literary scholarship. But it has a place if one considers the book as a study of a little-explored genre addressed to the general reader, and the detailed discussion of individual masques have the merit of sending one to the texts, to discover or rediscover a body of distinguished poetry. Yet although the book incorporates a substantial anthology of beautifully printed masque music, it cannot be said that Dr Chan takes us much further towards understanding the relationship between poetry and instrumental dance music (as distinct from song) within the masque. Any such undertaking may be doomed to unsuccess since masque music is of its nature ephemeral. The ritual of humanism was acted out as aristocratic masques and their audiences were identified at the evening's climax, and the Golden Age became here and now; it was at once a strength and a limitation. The vacuity of most masque music must be its unconscious admission that the vision was illusory, "like this insubstantial Pageant faded". In contrast, the

sinewy elegance of Jonson's masque poetry is not illusory, but its moral strength is intellectual and its tone staid. This must be why it sounds, for all its sensuality of imagery and rhythm, both austere and elegiac.

Jonson's phase of intensive masque-creation left a legacy to his theatrical work when he returned to the playhouse. As Dr Chan demonstrates in a fine chapter, the point of *The New Inn* is that although Jonson no longer claims that an image of Perfection contained in a song could represent a golden age, he does not seem to maintain that a mental image may enable the audience to "rejoin the real world with a new understanding". At the end of the play Lovell has a vision, "my dream of beauty", which recognizes a distinction between the "Love-ill" of the sports or revels and the "Love-well" of the play. This makes the play morally exhortatory, like Jonson's early work, but at a deeper level because prompted positively by love, instead of negatively by the unmaking of false appearances. So although in *The New Inn* redemption does not happen to us as it happens to us through the agency of Shakespeare's Lear, Hermione, Alonso or even Caliban, we at least leave the theatre for the real world knowing what is at stake. Similarly, in his last, unfinished theatre piece, *The Sad Shepherd*, Jonson returns to the pastoral convention with a difference, for it relates allegorical mythology to the domestic and seasonal festivals of domestic traditions. Dr Chan puts it, "the countryside of Jonson's allegory is not a fantasy paradise, but is fully realized in verse which makes us back to the directness and sanity of Jonson's praise of country life in *To Penshurst*". Again, it is at once a strength and a limitation. No wonder this shepherd is sad, making verse that is simultaneously tough and valedictory; as the wayside graffiti has it: "Nostalgia ain't what it used to be."

The avant-garde conservative

By Paul Driver

BAYAN NORTHCOAT (Editor)

The Music of Alexander Goehr 112pp. Schott, £295. 0 9019 3805 X

Two years before Alexander Goehr's fiftieth birthday, a small symposium has appeared to examine the nature of a genuine, already substantial oeuvre. It is an overdue tribute, but then Goehr's conservatism has earned him little favour. In the 1950s he was a figure symbolic of the new life then being shaken into English music. Goehr, with his 1951 *Lead*, *Postlude*, with his cantata *Sutter's Gold*, with his opera *Die Verurteilten*, through his father Walter Goehr, of the teachings of Schoenberg; disseminator of the innovations of Messiaen and the revolutionary propositions of Boulez; now he is assumed, as a conservative, to be rigidifying in the academy. But Goehr had always drawn from "the narrower, more modest avant-garde world". "I had," he testifies in the first of two interviews that begin and end the present volume, "never entirely lost sight of the fact that I was going to the way that Boulez, Stockhausen and Messiaen did, but I did not always agree with the solutions. As early as 1960, in the pages of *William* (Goehr's

magazine *The Score*, he was inserting common sense into the prevailing clouds of dogma and absurdity. An artist is related to the tradition which he comes and, thus, bond has little to do with time or progress. There is no common "only way" to any future stage; all art is new art and all art is conservative."

Against Darmstadt's insistence on pre-determination and the continuous presence within a work of all compositional possibilities, Goehr emphasized the restriction of possibilities as demanded by any specific material and individual inventiveness. To the infusion of Cageism itself he replied with his own artistically realistic version of "chance operations": "Our text-books are full of examples of exceptions; strange harmonic progressions, old contrapuntal combinations, which, we feel, enhance the expression in the music. I have, in a new, conscious, creative way, answered Pierre Boulez in the TLS (June 10, 1977) he wrote: "When do technical problems kill spontaneity? How can the technicality of a *trouille* be retained in coherent development? In falling to deal with these problems, creating what appears accidentally as a glorification or non-sequitur, we sometimes stumble on the new language, the sound profile (Boulez's term) of our time."

Another aphorism from his *Score* article runs: "Analysis should only

have one single purpose: to explain why a particular work makes its specific effect"—a much needed truism at a time when the distinction between simplicity and false complexity was dangerously obscure. But the formulation reminds us that Goehr is one of few contemporary composers to have pursued the "specific effect" while at the same time maintaining awareness of the analytical dimension. An extremely subtle, radical "conservatism" has ensured that Goehr neglects neither the emotional uniqueness that finally justifies a musical statement, nor the perceptible note-to-note coherence without which creative successes, however effective or ingenious, are only temporary arrangements. So a work like the Piano Trio of 1966 articulates a novel (folkloristic) expression in a classically precise grammatical form with a force as one, I think, could deny.

Robin Holloway, in the most stimulating, least orthodox contribution to this symposium, cites the Piano Trio as standing (with the orchestral *Metamorphosis/Dance*) for the fully realized "side of Goehr's art. His essay, "Towards a Critique," goes on to take issue, however, with the "linguistic" bias of that art—its predilection for logical, analyzable unfolding at the expense, as Holloway sees it, of a more ebullient, more free-flowing, more expressive style. He delivers some sharp insights in the process about, for example, Goehr's reluctance to bring his music to a head or to a definite end, or his norm of texture as being "the

nervously-articulated, punctuation-mark", but his passionate defence of it as "a feeling and movement" or as "glorious mud", is a little too personal. In any case he allows that Goehr's hesitancy and asceticism are put to creative use in the best pieces ("Poignant feeling is rendered through starvation of the medium employed"). Holloway ends, back-pedalling, by praising Goehr for the very thing—aspiring to a classical "grammar"—that he seemed earlier to have been condemning him for.

Though provocative, Holloway's critique shines out here as a model of how to write on music: bold, evaluative, handling musical concepts in an elegant, non-technical and literate manner. Too frequently in this book we are reduced to the level of technical programme-notes which tediously describe what is plain to hear anyway. If one is going to write technically, Bayan Northcoat's discussion of Goehr's recent music shows how it should be done. An explanation and comment is here compressed into scarcely a dozen pages; sometimes too densely for leisurely reading it is true, but invariably repaying the effort. Works are not described but placed and evaluated in their context. Northcoat tries to fathom what Holloway calls Goehr's "cross-pollination of arias and modes" that harmonic discovery of the Two Choruses of 1962 which Goehr's music "simply works"—and, more important,

points to its aesthetic consequences: a restoration of the distinction between idea and accompaniment; a restoration of the text as a harmonic frame of a piece; the validation of an individual features as at once original and the use of "chorale" or "developing" variations.

Earlier works, which fell outside Northcoat's purview, do not always get their due. The highly individualized qualities of *Pastorale* op 15, or of the op 24 *Romanza* for cello and orchestra, are not satisfactorily dealt with by Julian Ruxton in his lengthy description of the orchestral music. Hugh Wood's (1965) essay on the choral works is bland, descriptive approbation. Peter Paul Nash's consideration of the chamber music is probing and suggestive, but tortuous in expression and often abstruse. Bill Hopkins's treatment of the solo piano pieces is tentative, to detail but weak in its judgments, and his style, once more, is additively and repetitiously verbose. Melanie Delken supplies a clipped, clear account of the music-theatre *Triptych* (1968-70); and David Drew an energetic investigation of Goehr's only full-scale opera to date, *Arden* (1974). A new, very grand opera is in progress, which will embrace the recently premiered choruses *Babylon the Great is Fallen*. The implications of this project, both musical (a return to Bach) and dramatic (a return to Euripidean view of the world), are the subject of a second, and concluding interview with the composer.

In recent years photostats and microfilm have aided study though there may be secrets in the original that elude such easy methods of conveyance. The Scholar Press and Dr Tyson between them demand a higher standard of reproduction and the introductory notes to the volume help to clarify the problems of the text. One would, however, have welcomed a more detailed commentary, page by page, from Dr Tyson. The penulti-

The composer's hand

By Dennis Matthews

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Opus 59 No 1, 0 85967 546 7

Opus 59 No 2, 0 85967 547 5

Edited by Alan Tyson

Scalar Press.

The first two of Beethoven's "Razumovsky" Quartets mark the impressive launching of a new series of music facsimiles by the Scalar Press. The remaining one, op 59 no 3, is promised later as part of a continuing enterprise that seeks to make available a number of hitherto unpublished autographs. Many potential buyers will be put off by the prices, which are high even by inflationary standards. They are, however, commensurate with the high quality of production, which includes the use of multi-colour printing to distinguish the different inks and crayons of the original. Such niceties are in line with the ideals of the editor, Alan Tyson, who has long been admired for his musical scholarship in general and his work on Beethoven in particular. Not so long ago he applied his skill to the manuscripts of Mozart's "Prussian" Quartets and talked through his findings on television, stressing the importance of watermarks and paper-types.

In recent years photostats and microfilm have aided study though there may be secrets in the original that elude such easy methods of conveyance. The Scholar Press and Dr Tyson between them demand a higher standard of reproduction and the introductory notes to the volume help to clarify the problems of the text. One would, however, have welcomed a more detailed commentary, page by page, from Dr Tyson. The penulti-

mate page of the first movement of op 59 no 1, with its long-held high C in the first violin and scratched-out downward scales, is just one of many places to confuse the student and invite expert comment.

Even the final autograph of a work, though seemingly sacrosanct, may contain ambiguities, alterations and uncertainties. In some cases it may not even represent the composer's last word, since changes can still be made at the proof-reading stage. This is not to underrate the immense importance of the manuscript, which must in any case have an emotional appeal for the music-lover quite apart from its intrinsic value. It is moving to witness, as it were, the actual pen-strokes that preserved masterpieces. It is a valuable exercise in appreciation to deduce the reasons for the crossings-out and changes of mind that were liable in Beethoven's case to continue or overflow from the sketchbooks into the fair copy itself. "Fair copy" is however hardly the term to apply to many of Beethoven's final drafts. One hardly needs to be a musical archaeologist, yet close inspection shows a craving for musical precision beneath and beyond the superficial appearance of chaos. For Beethoven himself there can seldom have been any doubt about the ultimate location of a dot or slur, the extent of phrase-mark, or the placing of crescendo and other dynamic marks. Such details were as important to him as the notes themselves.

The first "Razumovsky", as Dr Tyson points out, is on a spacious timescale as it stands, reflecting the "new symphonic breadth" that followed in the wake of Beethoven's work on the *Eroica* Symphony. Yet it is abandoned the normal first-movement repeat, had the rarity of a through-composed scherzo (without repeat or "da capo"), and only the repeated exposition of the finale.

Among the fascinations of the autograph are some projected but cancelled repeat-signs in all three movements, including the large-scale repetition of the first movement's development and recapitulation—an unusual survivor of binary form that was preserved in the finale of the "Appassionata" Sonata of the same period. Occasionally Beethoven cancelled a page and re-wrote it, stitching the new together to cover up the redundant material. Curiously, if not wear and tear, unstitched them, resulting in apparent non sequiturs destined to bewilder the unwary reader.

Dr Tyson's verbal elucidations are confined to Beethoven's "German" script, those in "roman" lettering requiring no such deciphering apparently, a point that is not made clear in the very brief preface to the 3 minor Quartet. Here, as in op 59 no 1, the facsimile shows the self-critical Beethoven at work to the last, reshaping inner voices and even extending or shortening paragraphs. From the first bar to the last the attention is riveted and it is hoped, understanding enhanced. Every quartet player should note the painstaking changes in the scoring of the opening two chords and their ensuing reduction on the repeat, crammed in as an unpremeditated bar at the end of the exposition. At the end of the finale the manuscript shows a dramatic harmonic departure that Beethoven cancelled in favour of the present conclusion.

The availability of such facsimiles, despite their cost, should help to bridge the traditional gap between musicology and practical music-making. A glance at any page of these two quartets gives an insight into Beethoven's creative world that no printed page can offer. It is equally certain that the printed page will never look the same again in the light of such a study.

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The numerical and the numinous

By Martin Cooper

WILFRID MELLERS:
Bach and the Dance of God
324pp. Faber. £15.
0 571 11562 4

It is a commonplace in the history of the arts that each generation discovers, or rediscovers, a new aspect of the greatest artists' work, and in so doing discovers something of its own identity. The twentieth century has altogether reappraised Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and indeed Bach, as Wilfrid Mellers recognizes in his new book. Bach as "an invention of nineteenth-century consciousness" — a "great churchman and pious advocate of dogma" — was demolished at least thirty years ago, and no doubt rightly. It is Professor Mellers's belief, however, that "no one with ears to hear can doubt that Bach was a religious composer, and that his religion springs from the depths of the human psyche, rather than from a topical and local creed". In the present work he sets out to prove this in detail, by giving as it were chapter and verse — arguing, that is to say, from key-signatures, tempo, rhythm, tonal and overall structure of individual movements, and by applying systems of visual, numerical and doctrinal symbolism known to have existed in the composer's day. The Bach works examined are the St John Passion and the Mass in G Minor, but he also considers the unaccompanied cello suites, the Goldberg Variations and a number of preludes and fugues from the "48".

Professor Mellers's presuppositions and methods are very nearly identical with those of medieval interpreters of the Bible. For both him and them every text has a secondary significance besides that of plain statement, and in each case the allegory is theological or didactic, often both. Professor Mellers's terms of allegorical reference are of course wider than those of the medieval theologians and post-Christian psychologists, chiefly Jungian. In the cello suites, for instance, which he regards as an "apotheosis of the dance", he sees a man-woman relationship between bow and instrument, female substance wooed by male "will", corporeal motor rhythms alternating with metaphysical contemplation. In the E flat minor prelude and fugue from Book 1 of the "48", harmonic emotionalism alternates with contrapuntal (intellectual) responses to create a humanized spirituality. For him, as for the Schopenhauer, there is everywhere an indissoluble link between the text (musical in the one case, literary in the other), theological, musical and didactic purpose, music in the one case and moral in the other.

The music of the Passions and the Mass plainly — and more plausibly — lends itself to this system of hermeneutics. While many readers may find the interpretations purely instrumental music poetic and fanciful, subjectively revealing rather than intellectually compelling, only the prejudiced will reject outright the presence of extra-musical references in the Passions and the Mass. As Professor Mellers shows, references of this kind formed part of a tradition that Bach inherited and employed, often no doubt unconsciously. An instance of this is the Trinitarian imagery which is the most obvious example of numerological symbolism. Thus, in the St John Passion, the author distinguishes the E flat major (three flats) of supernatural grace from the G minor of human suffering, and he even finds a "trinity of quaternities" in 12/8 metres. Cryptography of this kind is, of course, notoriously easy to discover and may be abused. It is hard to believe that in one of the most subtle interventions in the Passion "Bach points the a priori nature of law by a little number symbolism, for when the crowd yells that it is not lawful for them to put any man to death, the theme on the word 'not' consists of five rising chromatic notes in reference to the fifth commandment, while the tenfold repetition of the phrase reminds us that there are ten commandments in all".

Nor am I convinced that the forty-nine bars of the "Crucifixus" were determined in the composer's mind (still less in his sub-conscious) by the fact that 49 = 7 x 7, and seven is traditionally a "sacred" number.

Unpatriotic ironies

By Gerald Abraham

BULAT OKUDZHAHA:
65 Songs/65 Pesen (bilingual)
174pp. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis.
\$18.50.
0 88233 637 1

A case of "the singer, not the song". Ten thousand Russians can't be wrong.

In this distance the singer is Bulat Okudzhava, born in 1924 in Moscow of a Georgian father and Armenian mother. After war service he entered the Faculty of Philology of Msk State University, graduating in 1950, and worked in the Komsomol area as a teacher in a village school and later as a journalist. He had already been writing verses and in 1956 he published a collection of them, *Livika*. At about this time he returned to Moscow and began to sing his verses to his own guitar accompaniment in a circle of friends. He confesses, "I'm not a guitarist and I'm not a singer, I don't know how to write music, and my compositions have little relation to the concert platform". (Guitarist Shaprov mistranslates this as "stage"). Nevertheless he contributes "A few words about Bulat Okudzhava" to this volume, arranged as "Okudzhava evening" in a small hall of the Leningrad House of Art in 1960. In his ap-
 titude half the words were lost, someone shouted "Rubbish!", and despite some applause he took his guitar and left the stage. ("This was my first big public appearance.") (But on the facing page of this ill-organized volume is a photograph showing Okudzhava at a microphone and captioned "House of Writers 1956.") "Guitarists accused me of being ungifted, composers of lacking professionalism, singers of having no voice, and all of them of effrontery and vulgarity... Schoolchildren accused me of pessimism, anti-patriotism... The press supported them."

When in 1968 the critic Vladimir Frumkin took twenty-five of Okudzhava's songs to the State Publishing House they were not brought out in their original forms but the poems were handed to Matvey Blanter, the acknowledged master of Soviet popular song, who set them to fresh music. According to Frumkin, Blanter "forced them into intonations absolutely foreign to them. The verses sounded strained and bad. The underlying implications disappeared and Okudzhava's melancholy irony evaporated." And when a Polish selection of twenty songs was published in Cracow in 1970 "his authors obviously wished to create concert versions of the songs; melody and (particularly) accompaniment were subjected to substantial reworking foreign to the original." Yet, performed by himself, Okudzhava's songs have apparently become very popular and actually generated a new wave of Soviet song.

"I remember Hitler turning to Furtwängler and telling him that he would have to allow himself to be used by the party for propaganda purposes, and I remember Furtwängler refusing. Hitler got angry and told Furtwängler that in that case there would be a concentration camp ready for him. Furtwängler was silent for a moment and then said: 'In that case, Herr Reichschancellor, I will be in very good company.'"

Friedelind Wagner's words are quoted in Venedi. Menuhin's *Unfinished Journey*, a book which, in many ways, tells us more, and more astutely, in ten of its pages, about the personal and musical character of one of Germany's greatest and most controversial conductors than Peter Pirie's book does in over a hundred.

We learn, it is true, about Furtwängler's secondary teachers, of Beethoven, Bruckner and Wagner, about the way his repertoire changed as he grew older, the way his accounts of the same work often differ widely from each other, of his championing of Mahler and Stravinsky, of his first performance with the composer of *Serenade* in Piano Concerto, of his skill as both instrumentalist and leader, of his collaboration with Menuhin, Fischer and Schwartzkopf.

But the book's main weakness is that it is too much of a collection of anecdotes and quotations. It is not a book that one can read from cover to cover, but it is a book that one can read from cover to cover.

The baton's beat

By Hilary Finch

PETER PIRIE:
Furtwängler and the Art of Conducting
149pp. Duckworth. £9.95.
0 7156 1486 X

Mr Pirie's tendency to eulogize, to make his observations fit what are frequently perilously dogmatic preconceptions, weakens the usefulness of the operation (and in the context of increasingly available deletions and re-releases of Furtwängler it can indeed be a waste of time). Pirie reflects, "one is being unfair to Tchaikovsky when one wonders what on earth Furtwängler saw in him. He was so very un-Furtwänglerish a composer." Perhaps recurring stylistic infidelities and perhaps the most meaningless and persistent leit-motiv too often impede and obscure observations which are obviously the fruits of hours of listening.

The book's introduction and finale begin to reveal a more considered response to Furtwängler's particular musicianship and tell us more of what we want to know about his technique, his influence on other conductors. But it is all too short, too repetitive, too vague. Barenboim, we are told, is his disciple: some investigations into the influence of Furtwängler on conductors like Abbado, Andrew Davis, Mahler and Muth would have been a welcome addition to the book and told us more about the man himself.

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Turning the handle

By Anthony Burgess

SUSAN PALMER and SAMUEL PALMER:
The Hurdy-Gurdy
256pp. David and Charles. £15.
0 7153 7888 0

Samuel Palmer is the son and Susan the mother. Samuel is an instrument maker. He made a hurdy-gurdy with which the mother fell in love. This book, exhaustive as to both text and (very beautiful) illustrations, is a pledge of love. In a brief foreword Professor Francis Baines (composer, leader of a consort of viols, hurdy-gurdy player) reports that, "the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, say that scarcely a day goes by without inquiries concerning hurdy-gurdies. That can mean only one thing — that it is high time there was a book about them. And here it is." He might have said more — that the book is a labour of love and so on. For my part I do not think we shall need another book on the hurdy-gurdy for a long, long time. What we may need is a brief demonstration on radio or television of hurdy-gurdy playing — the sound, that is, as opposed to the mere technique. Mrs Palmer is as enthusiastic on the technique as on the history.

The very name of the instrument lends itself to a polemic view of both its sound and its social status. Etymology? "C.18", says the new Collins: "Rhyming compound, probably of imitative origin." The name seems first to occur in print in Bonnet Thornton's "Ode on St Cecilia's Day" in 1749:

With dead, dull, doleful, heavy hums,
And dismal moans,
The sober hurdy-gurdy thrums.

Before that it had more dignified names — symphonie, sanfoigne, chamfogne, cymphan, syphonle, cyfonle, cyfonle, phonophone, fontone. There seems to be a Joycean here of *symphony* and *cliffion* in some of these terms, the clion or rags connoting the beggars who played the instrument, though perhaps primarily the cloth-covering of the strings which ensured a sweet

hushed tone. This brings me, perhaps belatedly, to what the thing is and how it works.

It is a stringed instrument with a handle. The handle turns a hidden wheel against which the strings vibrate. There is a manual keyboard whose keys operate tangents that shorten the strings and thus discourse melody. The keyboard has black keys which produce a diatonic scale, and white keys for chromatic inflections. The better class of hurdy-gurdy — like that used once by the French aristocracy — had or has two octaves; the lower or rural version had to be satisfied with one and a half. There is a tonic drone, as on bagpipes; a tonic-dominant drone is possible too. The effect, so far as I can judge, is of a one-stringed fiddle accompanied by a viola or cello playing on two open strings. I am assured that the sound is endearingly simple and altogether charming.

Its appearance is well recorded in pictorial art. A twelfth-century carving on the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela shows two kings or angels operating one hurdy-gurdy — sensible division of labour: one for grinding, the other for playing. In the eleventh-century York Psalter, King David's harp is accompanied by a recognizable cymphan or phonophone. And so, in almost unbroken succession, up to 1979, with a picture of Samuel Palmer himself churning and fingering a very lovely hurdy-gurdy with a smile and quite religious respect. Perhaps the most famous reproduction of the instrument is to be found in Hieronymus Bosch's *Hell*, where a miniature demon turns the handle but nobody attacks the key-board. We may term this an apodemoniosis of a humble and harmless discourse of melody which gave much innocent pleasure during several centuries.

I can have nothing but praise for a book which fills in, so eruditely and charmingly, a gap in most people's musical and social knowledge. Admiration, too, for the publishers, who assuredly have produced no best-seller. What is now called for, I think, is a visit to Samuel Palmer's workshop in Whitechapel and a demonstration of fonfonle-playing. His mother has done him proud.

The relative length of individual composers' entries is, however, sometimes disconcerting. Within reason, the number of lines or words given to one composer as compared to another is a silly thing to fuss about. But for Hindemith to receive 295 lines to Chopin's 74 does seem a little extreme. Indeed, his entry is one of the longest in the whole book, longer even than those for J. S. Bach and Beethoven.

The use of italics and quotation marks for nicknames (e.g. *Moonlight Sonata* but "Empress" Concerto) is not consistent. The list of abbreviations is incomplete. There is an entry for John Dankworth (most welcome), but not one for Cleg Laine despite the cross-reference. Burt Bacharach is correct spelt for his own entry, but becomes Bert Bacharach in the entry on Film Music. Some other details are open to dispute; for example, Debussy's Piano Prelude *General Lavine* — scenic piece was almost certainly inspired by a real music hall character, not a wooden puppet.

It would, admittedly, be a miracle if such a complex work of reference as this were free of all error. It is a pity about such slips as all the same, since the general level of scholarship and organization of this new edition is high, and it is a vast improvement on the old.

Jeremy Montagu's *The World of Romantic and Modern Musical Instruments* (1969, David and Charles, £10.50, 0 7153 7984 1) provides an illustrated account of the vast changes to string, keyboard, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments from the first half of the nineteenth century up to the development of electronic instruments in the 1920s and 1930s.

What loving punishment the Lord could give, a dog's life in the Parsonage, dog's graves where, in the typhus black, their death could live!

They were so little, childlike, small and bent, large noses, crooked mouths — the "dear remains" fitted a child's neat coffin, one long Lent

of self-denial all three sisters kept, killed by consumption and their dreadful drains. The words alone flashed out where rainstorms wept!

They really loved the Duke of Wellington, they were a nest of tiny troubled Tories — as colourful as parakeets and lories,

flaming with passion and Thy Will Be Done. Yet in that free-for-all, that tawdry misto, they didn't truly relish an ascido.

The cultured, polished people at the Grange, the "plaid silk frock", the "burnished shoes", "white trousers", meant nothing to these cats — they were all mousers

out on the moors and wild, far out of range. They never were lukewarm, or smooth, like lotion, what they liked best was fierce untamed emotion.

Charlotte was adamant in saying how Jane Austen was all right, after a fashion, but very superficial, short of passion,

not "spitted on the horns of a mad cow" (a very telling phrase of Emily's) but quite at home in high-born families,

without "fresh air", "blue hill" or "bonny beck" — instead the fenced-in flowers, the fine "neat borders". Almost, all three preferred the lower orders.

3: Personal

Branwell alone, with the greatest regularity, filled the old Black Bull with Hibernian hilarity, just the coarser sex with convivial vulgarity — they called him Patrick easily when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, taking opium with civility, quickly overturned all his painterly ability, oh, wasn't he the quare one, with his talkative utility — they called him Patrick openly when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, in that gloomy old sorority, broke out in a male and a masculine minority, chasing after tail, with a fig for all authority — they called him Patrick drunkenly when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, with a drinking man's proclivity, shining like a star as an agent of activity, acted out the dreams they repressed in their passivity — they called him Patrick praisingly when drinkers filled the inn!

Gavin Ewart

1: Traditional

What loving punishment the Lord could give, a dog's life in the Parsonage, dog's graves where, in the typhus black, their death could live!

Slab-sided judgment on the dismal tombs! Drear hopeless hymns, a stern-faced God that saves, the actual shrivelled flesh they rhymed with — worms.

They were so little, childlike, small and bent, large noses, crooked mouths — the "dear remains" fitted a child's neat coffin, one long Lent

of self-denial all three sisters kept, killed by consumption and their dreadful drains. The words alone flashed out where rainstorms wept!

2: Political

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Sound before sense

By Ian Davidson

GABRIELE BALDINI:
The Story of Giuseppe Verdi
Oscar to Un Ballo in Maschera
Translated and edited by Roger Parker.
296pp. Cambridge University Press.
£14.50 (paperback, £4.50).
0 521 2391 1

Gabriele Baldini was not strictly speaking a musical expert; he was, rather, a literary academic, and a delight in English literature. In his *Story of Giuseppe Verdi*, first published in Italy ten years ago, he argues for the primacy of the musical over the literary in Verdi's work. Unfortunately, he died before it was completed, and not so far from the end with a brief fragment on Verdi.

The result is provocative and stimulating but not really satisfactory. The problem is not that Baldini comes up with some unorthodox judgments on the relative merits of Verdi's operas, though that he certainly does: *Macbeth* he takes to be superior to *Otello*, *Simon Boccanegra* he thoroughly endorses, while *Un Ballo in Maschera* Verdi seems to rate himself above all previous work.

The difficulty is that he fails to substantiate his judgments precisely by those musical texts which he claims to put first. He dismisses the dramatic evidence of the libretto where it suits him (as in *Tragicore*), to argue the purely musical case for this opera's greatness; but when he comes to discuss *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the work which, with *Il Trovatore*, represents his greatest achievement — he uses the libretto as the central plank in his argument. His advocacy for *Ballo* is indeed remarkably eloquent, and his notion that Oscar is somehow an "other world" after a similar Riccardo, while Unica plays a similar role for Amelia, throws an

illuminating light on a work which does not, for all Baldini's eloquence, match up to his estimation of it.

If we read about opera, we would like to know why it affects us as it does — why we are moved, why we are excited by hearing singing *Di quella pira* or *Milano* and *Wacken singing Vienna*. There is obviously some connection between the physical experience of the noise, and the playing out of a drama, and the link may be as simple as Baldini suggests. But he would have been kinder to his readers if he had taken more seriously the vulgar but difficult task of registering what it is that Verdi does to us, and how.

Every so often, as in his discussion of the use of different voice registers and combinations, Baldini is "delicious". It sometimes surprises, and it sometimes will undoubtedly wish to add the book to their collection, but it will not do for those who are already thoroughly acquainted with his works.

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John C. Life

